

DOROTHY
WORDSWORTH
THE EARLY YEARS

BY

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*If you will go with us, you must
go against wind and tide.*

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To
B. D. W.

*mīn rūn-wita ond mīn rǣd-bora,
eaxl-Ʒestealla.*

TO THE READER

THIS book, although it is the fruit of close research and of an effort made to achieve truth, not only of spirit but of detail, and although it is, I trust, a contribution to knowledge, is not, in its nature or purpose, a book of research. Much new material has been excluded from it as being not essential to its unity, and much that is already well known has been included as being essential to that unity. The book has been written because, having thought much during the past ten years about the life and work of Dorothy Wordsworth, I have come to feel that to look upon her life is to gain something in knowledge of the nature of Life itself, flame-like, flickering, at times seeming to be a huddle of distracted details, at times quite perverse and wasteful—and yet relentlessly compelling all things towards unity of design. I have written, too, not without a sense, akin to pity and terror, of the way in which the unity may be achieved, quite against the grain of the desires of the beings whose lives go to the making of the design. To study the life of Dorothy Wordsworth is to watch the gradual closing in of the wearing and prosaic details of life upon a woman whose capacity for intensity of living amounted to genius, and who sought above all things fullness of life.

She never complained, and such intimations of suffering as she gave were dim, but it is the pitiless chiselling of suffering which shows in the delicate lines of her work.

C. M. M.

PREFATORY NOTE

It is a pleasure to me, in publishing this book, to acknowledge very gratefully my debt to those who helped me in my researches on those shadowy early years before Dorothy Wordsworth was closely associated with her brother the poet and his friends. The later years are well known, and abundant material connected with them has been preserved. The letters to Mrs. Clarkson alone, of which the manuscript is in the British Museum, give a full account of the life from day to day at Grasmere, from 1803 onwards. But of the early years little record is left.

I am deeply indebted, for help in filling out the outlines of these early years, to The Rev. T. J. Bentley, Rector of Fornsett, and to Miss Millson, of Ilkley, who placed at my disposal manuscript material connected with the Northgate-End Chapel, and who permitted me to see her interesting collection of books, including Wordsworth's own copy of the *Poems* of 1807, which he had given to Elizabeth Threlkeld the younger.

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Others to whom I am indebted are: Mr. J. W. Houseman, M.A., Headmaster of The Grammar School, Hipperholme; Mr. George H. Fry, Halifax; Mr. H. Crossley, of Sowerby Bridge; Mr. Kenneth Haigh, of The Halifax Library; Mr. Stanley Robinson, of The Sowerby Bridge Library; Mr. Herbert Bell, of The Armit Library, Ambleside; Mr. E. W. Crossley, President of The Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, who gave me the opportunity of examining some invaluable manuscript material in the library of the society, and other interesting material, including that copy of the pamphlet on The Convention of Cintra which Wordsworth had presented to Mr. William Rawson, of Mill House; and to Mr. J. H. Keighley, the Librarian.

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C. M. M.

February 14th, 1932.

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CHAPTER I: COCKERMOUTH

a spot which I remember as vividly as if I had been there but the other day, . . .

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH IN 1805.

IN December 1765 the painters were busy in the substantial two-storied house overlooking the Derwent on the western outskirts of Cockermouth. They had nearly completed their work of decoration and renovation, for John Wordsworth, the young lawyer who had come to Cockermouth the previous year on business for Sir James Lowther and had taken the house, was impatient to have it in order for his bride. On February 5th, 1766, he was to marry Ann Cookson, the daughter of William Cookson, Mercer, of Penrith.

A pleasant place it was to which the bridegroom, who was just twenty-four years old, brought the bride, who was just eighteen. The front of the house looking on to the street gave promise of sedate comfort, and this promise was fulfilled by the interior, comfortable and hospitable. In the well-stocked cellar, gin and rum and brandy, red wine and white, all were there for the passing guest.

The garden behind the house, bordering the river, had a beauty quite unsuspected by the passer-by on the street. The terrace at the end of the garden was an interesting place in all weathers. From it the secluded watcher in the garden could see the disappearing line of the bare road that led over the steep of the Watch Hill like a path into infinity. On the East could be seen the ancient towers of Cockermouth Castle. When the spring advanced into summer and the birds nested in the almost impregnable fastnesses of the hedge of roses and privet, the walk was the pleasantest place imaginable.

John Wordsworth's first child was born on August 19th, 1768, a boy, who was named Richard after his grandfather Richard

Wordsworth. William was born on April 7th, 1770; Dorothy (named after her mother's mother), on Christmas Day of the following year. The other children were John, born on December 4th, 1772, and Christopher, born on June 9th, 1774.

The first sound in the ears of the children was the music of the river flowing at the foot of the garden. Their first world was the garden itself. Most of all they loved the terrace walk, and the hedge of rose and privet. Their father had two fields by the river, and there the boys would play and bathe through long blissful summer days. William sometimes would stop his play, bewildered by a kind of wonder, so that he would fall silent and dreaming. He would be suddenly moved by the brilliant colours of the rainbow, by the sun beating through the mists, by the vapours of autumn mornings. Sometimes the feeling of wonder would come on him for no special reason, accompanied by a kind of longing. The steep bare road seen from the garden and disappearing over the hill like a guide into eternity led his thoughts towards the unknown. He had one or two adventures in the unknown, which filled his mind with impressions, for which he had no words—the wonder of seeing, as he walked along a valley, a shepherd and his dog emerge from the silvery vapours of a misty day, high on the hills; the terror of coming upon a name carved on the turf near a mouldering gibbet, the beauty of bare pools in the shadow of the hills, the vastness of the hills and the sound of the wind sweeping them.

Dolly kept closer to home. She loved to follow her mother about the house. When William and Richard were within reach, she was always at their heels. At other times she amused herself in the garden, helping the gardener, playing by herself on the terrace, or chattering to John or Kit. She would rush after the butterflies that fluttered about the garden like flying flowers, laughing with delight as she followed them, but would draw back sensitively just as she was about to touch their wings. She would hunt with her brothers for the nests in the privet hedge, but would turn away sorry for the poor birds when the blue and speckled treasure of the eggs was disclosed.

Occasionally the children went for holidays to Whitehaven, where their Uncle Richard lived. The journey in the coach was always a bustle of pleasure to the boys, and the approach to the town was a delight to them. From the steep road above Whitehaven could be seen the white waves breaking against the quays and piers, and the voice of the sea could be heard. The first time Dolly heard this sound she burst into a storm of tears.

There were visits, less pleasant, to the quiet house of their grandparents at Penrith. William was sometimes in trouble during these visits. He was often rebuked for being moody and passionate. After being punished he would brood all by himself in the attics. Now and again he did turbulent and defiant things that none of the others dared to do. One day in the drawing-room Richard and he were playing at tops, when he stopped in his play and looked at the family pictures hanging round the walls.

"Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?" said he.

Richard replied: "No, I won't."

"Then," said he, "here goes," and struck his lash with a kind of dark pleasure through the hooped voluminous petticoat.

During one of these visits he was sent to Dame Birkett's school, where he got to know the other Penrith children. They all knew the Hutchinson boys and girls. Mary Hutchinson was just about Dolly's age.

Richard and William learned their first lessons from their mother. Then they were sent to the Cockermouth Grammar School, kept by the Rev. Mr. Gilbanks. But it was their father who gave them their first taste of story and song. He made them learn passages from Shakespeare and Milton by heart. Most of all they loved the queer little verses in *The Faerie Queene*, and the stories of "bloudy bold Sans loy" and of "heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb."

When Dolly was five years of age her mother went away for a little to visit a friend in London. The children looked forward eagerly to her return, wondering what she would bring to them.

But soon they knew somehow that Mama, when she returned, was different from the Mama who had gone away. She coughed a great deal, and she no longer moved briskly about the house in the mornings, or taught Dolly her letters. She spent most of the day lying on her sofa. Even Kit could not tempt her to play, and his prattle seemed sometimes to tire her.

She went away to Penrith—to get better, she said. She was still away, even at Christmas time. Then one sad day in March, the children, wondering, were told that Mama could never come back home again. Four days later they knew that Mama was being carried to her resting-place, in Penrith churchyard. A vague sorrow and uneasiness rested like a cloud over them, and oppressed them.



CHAPTER II: HALIFAX

*Halifax is made of wax,
Heptonstall of stone.
There's pretty girls in Halifax,
In Heptonstall there's none.*

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY JINGLE.

MRS. WORDSWORTH before her death had expressed the wish that her friend and cousin, Elizabeth Threlkeld of Halifax, who was just about her own age, should take Dolly under her charge. Miss Threlkeld was the youngest child of Mrs. Cookson's sister, who had married the Rev. Samuel Threlkeld and had gone with him from the North to Halifax in 1744 when he took up the charge of the Northgate-End Chapel there. She was serene and happy of disposition, unselfish and very fond of children. Already she found great happiness in bringing up Martha, Edward, Anne, Samuel and Elizabeth Ferguson, the children of her sister Ann, who had died in 1773, and whose husband, John Ferguson, a linen-draper of Halifax, had followed her to the grave in April 1775.

Dolly, who had gone to Penrith just before Christmas, remained there after her mother's death, waiting for her mother's "Cousin Betsy" to fetch her to Halifax. Grandmother Cookson, who was kept too busy between house and shop to have very much time to spare for her, found her a little troublesome. Dolly was not the quiet kind of child she would have loved most. Her restless life and rapid glancing movements and excitable moods needed constant checking.

It was a happy day for the child when her "Aunt," as she called her mother's cousin, came for her in the summer. Elizabeth Threlkeld was accompanied by her brother William. She loved at once the eager, fair-haired, wild-eyed little girl her cousin Ann had left in her care, and Dolly felt almost as if in this sweet wel-

coming aunt she had found her mother again. They left Penrith for Halifax in a chaise on Saturday the 13th June. Mr. Cookson gave Elizabeth five guineas for the expenses of the journey. It had been arranged that the yearly payment for the child's expenses should be ten guineas.

Dolly was in ecstasies at the thought of the journey, and for a time all she saw delighted her, the long shining lakes, the valleys through which they travelled, the hills with the sheep upon them, the coaches they met whose drivers politely saluted their driver by lifting their whips, the inns with their huge stables and beautiful horses. But before they reached Skipton, the journey had become almost a dream to her, and she hardly noticed the succession of moors at the end, or the last hurricane descent into Halifax, or the Old Cock Inn when the coach drew into its yard.

In a short time it seemed to her as if she had always lived under the shadow of the Beacon Hill and always known the children with whom she played. She became one of a large happy family. Some of the Ferguson cousins were quite big. Martha was almost sixteen years old; Edward was a big boy of fourteen; Anne was twelve. Samuel and Elizabeth, only a little older than herself, were her constant companions. William and Nelly Threlkeld, Uncle William's twin children, were younger. But among Mr. William Pollard's children, Ellen, Jane and Harriot were about her own age. Jane was only a few months older, and became inseparable from her. Catharine and Cordelia Pollard were nearer the age of Martha Ferguson, and rather too old to play much with the little girls.

Soon after Dolly came to Halifax, Mr. John Wesley preached there one Sunday. His text was: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Everyone was excited about his visit, and talked a good deal about his sermon. Dolly was told by her cousins that it was because of the coiners, who tampered with the money so that Halifax people had difficulty in getting their money accepted, but she could not

quite understand how the coiners spoiled the money and made her uncle and Mr. Pollard so angry.

Afterwards, when she had quite forgotten about Mr. Wesley and the sermon, she heard from her cousins and from the servants many stories of the coiners who had infested Cragg Vale, until the moors sweeping up almost to the town seemed to her dark and interesting places, more fascinating than any of the lurking-places of the robbers of romance. Cousin Martha could just remember when David Hartley, the "King" of the coiners, had been hanged. Dolly, as she listened to stories of the "King," thought no robber chief or hunted outlaw of old half so terrible and dangerous.

Yet these stories were of yesterday. Only a few years before she had come to Halifax the bodies of two of the coiners, who were also murderers, had been hung in chains to whiten on the Beacon Hill. All the Ferguson cousins could remember the excitement of the days when the bodies had been brought from York, and the crowds that gathered on the Beacon in the expectation of watching the fixing of the chains. Dolly, as she played in the country at the end of Northgate, or scrambled on the wooded slopes near the town, could see every day the bones high-hanging in their rusty irons. What was most frightening to the children scampering past with averted eyes was that one of the murderers still pointed with his right hand towards the scene of his last crime, with a gesture curiously terrifying and yet somehow shrunken and pitiful.

Dolly longed always for stories. Most of all she loved to hear stories of when her aunt and mother were little girls. These stories were not terrifying, but gay and reassuring—and yet there was a kind of wonder about them, as if they were stories of a world somehow different from the ordinary world, which made them more interesting than fairy stories. Aunt Betsy was the only one of her family to be born in Halifax. Her sister Ann and her brothers Thomas and William had spent their earliest days in Cumberland. One of Dolly's favourite stories was to hear how Mr. Threlkeld had brought his family to Yorkshire. Travelling in these days was very different, Aunt Betsy said. The baggage had been sent on by carrier, and the family travelled, not in a chaise as Dolly had done,

but more like a band of gipsies. Her father rode on horseback single, her mother behind a friend, her sister before the man, and Thomas and William like merry little packages, in two panniers, one on each side of a horse, which had a drum or something that had been forgotten when the rest of the baggage was packed, dangling from the saddle. They were all very gay as they journeyed along. To the children it was a kind of long picnic. Near Skipton someone asked them, perhaps because of the hanging drum, if they were players. "Yes," said the friend, laughing, "we shall play *Cato* tonight."

But at Skipton they had to be more serious, for they were met by members of the Halifax congregation who had come to convoy them to Halifax. There the family had to scatter, as they had not yet found a house. Various members of the congregation gave them hospitality. The boys were at one house; Ann was sent to another. The parents stayed first of all at Old Well Head.

Dolly had her lessons, in sewing and reading and writing, chiefly from her aunt. She learned dancing, of which she was very fond, along with the other children of her group.

On Sundays she went to the Northgate-End Chapel, where the Rev. Mr. Ralph now preached.

As the years passed, she grew to love the busy little town, for those she loved were part of its life. Her uncle William and Mr. Pollard were merchants, constantly in touch with the weavers and manufacturers around the town; her aunt kept a milliner's and linen-draper's shop near the Old Cock. Many people came and went in the course of the day.

On Saturdays, when the people from the hills and valleys flocked into the market, the streets, thronged with people and lined with stalls packed with fruit and vegetables, and with heaps of pottery and crockery lying about on the ground, were a huddle of life. Not less lively was the great Piece Hall, of which Uncle William and the other merchants were so proud, and whose opening Dolly could just dimly remember. It was a sight to see on cloth-market days, with its buyers and sellers intent as bees on

their work, and its perpetual stream of men carrying bundles to and fro. With its pillars and galleries and numberless little rooms to which the manufacturers brought their cloth for the merchants to see, it was like nothing so much as an enormous industrious hive.

On fair days horses and droves of bewildered cattle added to the crowding and confusion of the streets, and it was quite an adventure for the girls to go out among the crowds.

At times Dolly thrilled, vaguely yet keenly, to the life about her, and to the rough vitality which she could feel surging around her. Sometimes on dark winter evenings, as she read or sewed, she would tingle with excitement, without knowing why, as she heard the boys clattering in their clogs through the stone closes, or their shouting at their games or the crude rhythm of their jingles.

She heard much talk, of trade and of politics, from her uncle and his friends. She realized gradually that everybody was not secure and comfortable, and that those who were secure and comfortable felt it as a kind of charge laid upon them to uphold their security against those who were in want and misery. When she was eleven years old, in June 1783, the corn rioters surged through the streets, past her aunt's house, and she could hear the angry roar of the mob outside the White Swan, crying for the corn to be brought out. One clear windy Saturday in August the town was again shaken by a mad excitement when the leaders of that mob were hanged on the Beacon Hill, covered with the multitude of people gathered upon it. The white strained faces of thousands were upturned towards the scaffold, and the sighing of pity and terror that swept through the surrounding valleys and hills could be felt in the town, like the beatings of distant waves.

On September 7th, 1783, large and excitable crowds were again in the town, gathered to hear Mr. Wesley, who always, old and frail though he was, aroused a tumult of feeling in his hearers. As he stood before the people, his worn and aged face framed by his long white locks, many felt as if a prophet were speaking to them.

In the beginning of 1784 Dolly had the news that her father had died on December 30th. This was a grief to her, yet in a shadowy kind of way, for the memory of her father was faint. Even of her mother, her memories, although very sweet, were beginning to be very faint. More clearly than anything else belonging to her first years she could remember the river at the end of the garden, the terrace and the hedge of rose and privet. These things she remembered, but as in a dream. A kind of beauty and wonder rested on them all—and a memory as of a world that had depth and bliss.

So now, although she grieved, it was with an impersonal kind of grief, more as for the passing of her early world. A shadowy fear and sense of insecurity touched her. Most of all she grieved for her brothers, especially for poor William and John, who had just returned to Cockermouth from their school at Hawkshead for Christmas holidays that must have been very sad for them.

In the years that followed she read a great deal and she heard a great deal of talk about books. She had many opportunities of reading, and, although her aunt tried to direct her, she read chiefly where her fancy roved. When she was fourteen she was an eager devourer of Richardson, whose *Clarissa* she found especially absorbing. The Rev. Samuel Threlkeld had been a great admirer of the seventeenth-century writers, especially the divines. Among his favourites were Hales and Cudworth, Henry More and Chillingworth. His books were still in Halifax. But Dolly was more interested in the new books, and she had opportunities of seeing them too. Both her uncle and Mr. Pollard were much interested in the circulating library which had been founded in November 1768 largely owing to their efforts. They were usually on the committee and they had the power of advising as to the new books to be bought. In their choice they exercised great care, considering and discussing well the books they recommended, and this was necessary, for the subscribers kept an eye on the books ordered, and were ready to censure an unlucky choice. In 1786, when Mr. Lister had persuaded the committee to buy *The Trial of Lady Ann Foley*, a general meeting in September ordered the book to be

burnt "as a very improper book" for the library. There was quite a buzz of talk about this improper book. The library, which in its first years was housed in the Upper George Yard, where Mr. Nathaniel Binns, the printer, its first librarian, had his premises, was at the time of this exciting episode housed in a room on Miss Threlkeld's premises, its second home. Mr. Robinson Crowder was then the librarian.

Both Dolly and Jane Pollard could at this time see most of the new books that interested them. They were not wholly dependent on the library: there was also the wonderful bookshop kept by Mr. Edwards in the Old Market in which they could now and again have a look at the new books and admire the beautiful vellum bindings of some of the rarer books and the delicate drawings in black and white on the sides, which were a special feature of some of the Edwards books. They were proud of this fine bookshop. Even strangers from the South passing through the town marvelled at the beauty of its books and prints.

In January 1787 Dolly was looking forward to reading the poems of a new Scottish writer, a ploughman named Robert Burns, whose poetry, curious, original and new, was causing a good deal of talk and had been ordered for the library at a committee meeting on the 17th. She was eager to increase her knowledge in all ways. Not only did she wish to be a companion to her brothers when they left school, but she had an obscure feeling that one day she might have to earn her living, for although her father had left a considerable sum of money, it was in the hands of Lord Lonsdale, who refused to part with it. Her aunt sympathized with this feeling, and for a time Dolly was sent to have lessons at the best school in the neighbourhood to complete her education and give precision to her knowledge. This was the Boys' Grammar School at Hipperholme, a school very much like the one her brothers attended at Hawkshead. The Rev. Richard Hudson was the head master. The walk to the school was a delightful one, through pleasant wooded slopes and along a sparkling beck, until at length the little school, set high on its hill, came into view.

Even more than study, she loved to wander in the country near the town, which in some directions was exceedingly beautiful. There were parts of the moors which were not considered very safe and which were forbidden ground, but Jane and she were allowed to spend much of their time in the safer country. The pleasant Ryburn Valley and the country near Sterne Mill Bridge were favourites. Here there was much to delight. These walks and ramblings meant so much to the girls that it seemed as if half their life were cut off if they were prevented from taking them.

Now and again they made various expeditions in the valley of the Calder. Dolly loved this valley, with its varied views, now with trees hanging down to the water and little mills here and there close to the woods, now with wooded hills rising sheer, and black craggy rocks. She was at times completely absorbed by the appearances of things. But it was not always the most striking effects of beauty which absorbed her most. There were moments, which charmed her more, when a landscape not transcendently beautiful seemed suddenly to take meaning from the human figures which chanced to be passing and which seemed so much part of it that they were picturesque as trees walking—a woman passing along with a market-basket, a man with a burden on his shoulder and a staff in his hand resting on a bridge for a moment before continuing his journey up one of the steep hill roads, a worker bending to draw water near his cottage, men driving pack-horses over the Beacon Hill.

She loved too the witchery of stray effects of light and shade, creating beauty out of things in themselves not beautiful—as when a bright evening sky made a bare wall look dark and austere and mysterious; or the light of the watery sun sharpened the outlines of chilly autumn trees so that they seemed lovelier than leafy boughs; or the tenters beside the cottages on the hillside gleamed dazzling white in the bright sunshine; or the cottages themselves, half revealed, half concealed by the brightness and shadows of the day, seemed like stone nests, perilously poised; or sudden bursts of sunshine made of the hills a dark frame for the busy town. These things were happiness to her. Sometimes, lying in a sheltered nook

in a high place and looking down on the life below, she felt as if she were perched in a Tower of Joy not built by hands.

She was just beginning, along with Jane, to look forward to parties and dancing, when she had to return, in the spring of 1787, to Penrith. She was very sorry to go, for her aunt—she said—had been her mother; her affection for Jane had become steady and deep, and the life around her was sufficiently full and interesting to absorb her. She was sorry to leave friends so dear and a life so happy. She visited each well-known and loved place before she went, promising herself that she would come back to them as soon as she could. And when at last she got into the coach for the North, she left protesting vehemently that Halifax was a dear town, and that although she had to leave it she would ever consider it as her home.



CHAPTER III: PENRITH

The boys in our family were all good. I was always a termagant, you know.

CONVERSATION OF DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

ALTHOUGH Dolly felt as if she had left her heart with her friends in Halifax she was eager to see her mother's people, now grown old, and to care for them. But her reception in Penrith chilled her. Grandmother Cookson looked critically at the slight fair-haired girl, still unchecked and glancing swift in movement, full of unexpected talk and vehemences, abrupt and startling at times, a little wild and more than a little shy, and in her heart thought Dorothy was all that was not "notable," and in much need of curbing and checking. She kept speaking of the sedate clever notable girls of the neighbourhood, and pointing them out as examples, till Dorothy grew to hate the word "notable."

Grandfather Cookson hardly ever opened his mouth except to find fault. Uncle Kit, her guardian, was carping, critical and unkind.

Dorothy found that all the things which were dear to her were of little value to her grandmother. There was little talk of books or politics or dancing or gaiety of any kind in this house. Reading was considered a waste of time, so Dorothy got into the way of snatching odd moments for her reading when her grandmother was in the shop. Walking was regarded as an exercise to be taken chiefly on Sunday. Dorothy had promised to write often to her friends, and her grandmother hated to see her spending time in writing, so she began to sit up at night to write to Jane. She loved this time, for then she felt free. Sitting alone in her room by candlelight in her shabby bed-gown, she would forget how often she felt small and lonely and desolate, and feel again the sweetness of companionship. When she took up her pen it would be in a kind of nervous haste. She would feel impatient with her candle for the

flickering light which checked her speed, impatient with her uncurled hair for falling over her paper and getting in the way of her pen, impatient with the pen itself for being all too slow for her vehement hurrying thoughts.

She missed very much the interesting talk round the fireside in Halifax. The conversation of her grandparents, all of work, was unbearably monotonous. The evenings, when she sat sewing, oppressed her. Her grandmother would talk about work, or the neighbours, or endlessly about the neighbours' servants, where they came from, why they left, whether they were good workers, until Dorothy, sitting silent as she sewed, felt suffocating with a sense of futility and suppression. Or there would be silence, still more oppressive, and Dorothy would try to think of something to say, and could think of nothing except that she needed new thread, or that she had another shirt to mend. Sometimes she wondered whether the silent Dorothy of Penrith could be the same girl as the Dolly who had chattered so easily throughout the evenings in Halifax. Worst of all, she found that from being rebuked so often when she spoke thoughtlessly, she was getting into a way of checking herself sharply if ever she fell into a natural easy way of talk. Sometimes she found herself stammering. It was becoming difficult for her to express herself without an almost painful struggle.

Her chief comfort in these days was the quiet friendliness of her childhood's friend, Mary Hutchinson, now grown tall and slender, not pretty, but with an expression winningly sweet. There was something alike in the chances of Mary's life and her own which made a kind of bond between them. Mary's mother had died in the same year as Dorothy's father; her father had died in 1785, and Mary, with some of her younger brothers and sisters, was being brought up by her aunt, Miss Elizabeth Monkhouse, with whom she was not in very close sympathy. Yet she managed to be serene and happy, with very little to make her happy.

Dorothy admired this. She wrote to Jane that Mary Hutchinson was "one of the best girls in the world."

Another thing helped her to bear the monotony of her life

quietly, the hope of seeing William, John and Kit in the summer, when they were to return from school for holidays. But even the pleasure of the boys' return was marred by a piece of petty tyranny on the part of Uncle Kit. William wrote to remind his uncle that the holidays began on June 20th, but he did not ask in his letter for horses to be sent. Uncle Kit punished this carelessness by sending no horses. Dorothy awaited eagerly from day to day the arrival of the boys, while they, equally impatient, lingered at Hawkshead, waiting for the horses. At last William, fearing that something must be wrong, hired a horse and rode over to Penrith in some anxiety. From the moment Dorothy saw the brilliant glance he threw at his uncle on hearing the cause of the delay, she loved him with all her heart.

The coming of the boys brought her consolation and reassurance. At times she had not known what to make of the painful sense of isolation she felt, and she had half feared that the fault lay in her own impatience and over-sensitiveness. Now she was no longer bewildered. The coldness of the welcome given to her brothers seemed to her altogether wrong. It aroused in her not only anger but contempt, for it seemed to her excessively ungenerous, seeing that the boys had no other home. Uncle Kit was cold and contemptuous, and the servants imitated his manner, making it clear that they regarded the coming of William, John and little Kit as bringing them unwelcome burdens. The humiliations endured by the boys hurt Dorothy far more than the sense of estrangement she had experienced herself. She felt passionately protective.

She was now no longer lonely. The boys surrounded her with love. Finding her starved for reading, they lent her the books for which she had longed. They planned along with her a happy future which should atone for all the pin-pricks of the present. John was going to sea to make all their fortunes. William was going to make a home for her as soon as he left Cambridge.

They all talked much of the home of their childhood. As she listened to the boys, the Cockermouth home became vivid again to Dorothy. William told her how his father had grieved after their mother's death, and had never been the same again. He told of the desolateness of the time when their father died—and how

Richard, John and he had followed the body to the grave, on a day of snow and wind and sleety showers that had seemed to add to the desolateness.

Kit had been at Penrith at the time.

He spoke too of their mother, of whom he had one or two distinct recollections. He could remember her pinning a nosegay to his breast when he was going to say his catechism in the church before Easter. He remembered her reclining in her bedroom during her last illness. One reproof she had given him was fixed in his memory. He had gone in to the church one day to see a woman doing "penance"—as he was told, in a white sheet. Somehow he had expected to be given a penny, and when he came home had said to his mother:

"Mama, they did not give me a penny, as I had been told they would."

His mother, who had told him he was a good boy for having gone to the church, said to his surprise:

"Oh, if that was your motive, you were very properly disappointed."

Dorothy loved William passionately from the first. A touch of wildness in him made him all the dearer to her. She never looked at him without thinking of Beattie's lines:

{ In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene.
In darkness, and in storm, he found delight:

Her love did not require words. It was sufficient for her to see him; it was exquisite just to know that he was near. The violence of his affection satisfied her.

William found in her a fullness of understanding, a depth and sweetness, which charmed him. She understood, almost without words, things which from his childhood he had felt, but which he had never expected anybody else to understand. The world around him had always aroused in him the keenest feeling, at times overwhelming him in the day, and filling his sleep with tumultuous dreams at night. Sometimes he had thought he would like to write about these things; at other times, perceiving that he alone among his friends had these feelings, he had been half ashamed of them,

and had tried to repress them. He had not been long with Dorothy before he saw that she too was moved by beauty—much as he himself was. She did not need to tell him of this. The rich lights of evening seen on the trees and woodland paths, the sunlight reflected in moorland pools, the bare majesty of a crag outlined against the skyline, the meadows suddenly dyed to the most delicate green by the summer rain—would bring a light to her eyes that gave him the divinest sense of companionship. She seemed to listen to the music of the earth, to the delicate sounds of the flowers and the silken rustle of the grasses.

William found that he could talk to her about things which hitherto he had never been able to put into words, and as he talked, he forgot to be ashamed of those poetic hauntings which at times seemed to him the most real things in his life, and at other times mere madness.

When she talked, he was absorbed in what she said. She had a way of looking at things which made him feel as if she were making him see a new world. Every now and then she would tell him something about her life, or the people she had known, which gave him almost a pang of pleasure. He loved her stories. She told him the story of the coming to Halifax of the Threlkeld family, and this, with its hint of old days and old ways, pleased him greatly. It made him feel almost within hail of Addison. Another of Dorothy's stories which made a deep impression on him was the story of a cottager's little daughter sent out in a snowstorm from her father's cottage near Sterne Mill Bridge to guide by the light of a lantern her mother returning from the town—and who herself became confused and bewildered, and fell into the water near the bridge. The story, with its hints of poverty and hardships and straitened ways, filled him with a sense of lament piercing yet shadowy.

This companionship was broken in August. School reopened on August 5th. William was not going back to school, but it was decreed that he should go to Hawkshead with John and Kit, and board at Ann Tyson's cottage until it was time for him to return to have his clothes prepared for Cambridge. Dorothy was reluctant to let him go. She felt as if her golden grain of days, exquisite rare

grain, was being squandered by careless hands. After he went she suffered severely. She dreaded very much the coming on of the winter, the confinement of the house, the ill-nature of her grandfather and the carping of Uncle Kit. She longed for Halifax and her friends there. She felt forlorn and dull.

William returned on October 7th, and was with her for three weeks while she prepared his outfit. He left for Cambridge at the end of the month, anticipating eagerly the new life awaiting him. Dorothy had nothing to look forward to but a meagre and joyless routine. She was somewhat cheered, however, by the presence of Uncle William Cookson, who took a fancy to her and tried to make things easier for her by seeing that she had time and place for studying. He arranged that she should be with him from nine to eleven every morning, and that she should study French and Arithmetic. Knowing that she was often pinched for time for her letters, he let her write sometimes instead of working at French. When there was a fire in his room Dorothy sat with him at her sewing.

She read as much as she could. When she could get the books, she read the new poetry and discussed it in her letters. Jane helped her by transcribing poetry for her. She had not seen the Burns volume before leaving Halifax, but William delighted her by procuring her the sight of a copy.

As Christmas drew near, she felt lonely and wistful. Christmas Day was her birthday, and it had always been a very happy day. Jane was happily looking forward to merry evenings and agreeable dances. John and Kit were going to Uncle Richard for their Christmas holidays. Dorothy also had an invitation to spend Christmas at Whitehaven, but she was not allowed to accept it. She dreaded the oppression of a Christmas spent at Penrith.

About this time Grandfather Cookson died. His life had been burdensome to him at the end and Dorothy could feel little regret at its passing. She did not expect that her grandfather's death would make any difference to her own way of living. It was one of her chief troubles that she could see no prospect of change in her lot in the near future.

But the summer of 1788 brought with it a vivid joy. William

was spending the vacation at Hawkshead, but he pleased himself by roaming about the country at will. In the midst of these wanderings he visited Penrith. Dorothy was free to accompany him in his walks during this visit, and sometimes Mary Hutchinson was with them. They spent many happy hours in Brougham Castle, but their favourite walk was in the beautiful pathways of the Lowther woods. Again, William felt a kind of enchantment in being with Dorothy. Golden happiness transfigured all they saw. It was as if they had succeeded in recapturing for a brief spell the vision of childhood, and all on which their eyes rested were clothed in a visionary loveliness. Secure in this vision, William felt that the poet's soul was his and the poet's calling. He made Dorothy very happy by showing her parts of a poem which in his heart he had already dedicated to her. In this poem, called *An Evening Walk*, he looked forward to the day in which their dream of a home together would come true.

Ev'n now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulph of time between)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way;
How fair it's lawns and silvery woods appear!
How sweet it's streamlet murmurs in mine ear!
Where we, my friend, to golden days shall rise
'Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hush'd into the tranquil breast of death.

With William's departure, bleak meaningless days began again for Dorothy. Kind Uncle William again came to the rescue. Many times Dorothy had gone with him to visit his friends the Cowpers. When on October 17th, 1788, he married Miss Dorothy Cowper, Dorothy and William Monkhouse were the witnesses of the wedding. One day he invited Dorothy to go for a walk with him. He asked her during that walk whether she would care to make her home with him in Norfolk. Dorothy at first could not speak. She laughed and cried alternately, incoherent with excitement and joy.

Her uncle was much touched. It was as if a wild bird had slipped the bars of a cage.



CHAPTER IV: FORNCETT

There's no deepe Valley, but neere some great Hill.

“THE DUTCHESS OF MALFY.”

DOROTHY set out for Norfolk with her uncle and aunt in the autumn of 1788. She spent some pleasant weeks in Newcastle, visiting friends. Brief but delightful was the dayspent with William in Cambridge, where she admired the buildings, enjoyed walking in the College courts and groves, and was amused at the smart powdered heads of the students and the black helmet-like hats with a square piece of wood at the top. After a stay of a few days at Norwich they reached Forncett.

It was December when they arrived. Yet their first impressions of their home were of grace and beauty. They drove to the Rectory through a fine avenue of limes, bare and leafless, but still beautiful. The house was spacious and comfortable. And Dorothy decided that the garden had the promise of charm.

The little church of St. Peter was close to the Rectory. They felt that it was a point of union between the living and the dust that had once been life and that had laboured to make its beauty. Its tower was Norman; its oak pews were carved with figures speaking of the country life of the fifteenth century—priest and penitent, falconer and sower, butcher and baker were among the carved heads; the Tudor rose was there and the beauty of Jacobean carving. The graves of those who had worshipped in it lay around it. It called the heart to meditation and peace.

Before the end of the year Dorothy was on terms of friendship with the birds in the Rectory garden, especially the robins, who would come into the room in the sunny weather and hop about it without any sign of fear. She made the garden her special care, giving it such time as her other work and the hours of study she

spent with her uncle, left to her. In the spring it rewarded her care, and in the early summer it was very beautiful.

During that spring and summer she thought Forncett had a gracious beauty and sweetness of its own, although it was very different from the kind of country she loved most. She looked on meadows scarlet with poppies, most beautiful to see. Every morning she heard the singing of a great choir of birds, thrush and bullfinch and blackbird and yellowhammer. The larks soared singing from among the graves. And the song of the nightingale could be heard even in the dawn.

Dorothy's energy was not satisfied with such work as she did in the house and garden, and she began to do a good deal of work in the parish. In July she succeeded in establishing a little school. By the end of the year she had nine scholars, to whom she taught reading and spelling, and who learned prayers, hymns and catechism under her direction. She wrote to Jane that she had "one very bright scholar, some very tolerable, and one or two very bad." Those who lived near came to her every Wednesday and Saturday evening. On Sunday her hours were from nine till church-time, from one to three, and from four to half-past five.

These were small beginnings, but Dorothy was always hoping to have a school on a more extensive plan which would include a class for the villagers.

The poor of the parish knew her well. When Mr. Wilberforce visited the Rectory at the close of 1789 he noticed her practical care for such hardship as might be relieved, and made her an allowance of money to be used by her in the way that seemed best. Dorothy, who liked him, sent a message to Mr. Pollard through Jane, asking for his vote for Mr. Wilberforce at the next general election. Jane teased her a little about this, and asked whether a certain seal she used were also given her by the generous Mr. Wilberforce. Dorothy wrote in reply: "The seal you showed so much sagacity in your conjectures about was given me by a Penrith friend, Mary Hutchinson."

Mary, the first of the Cookson cousins, was born in the early

spring of 1790. Her coming interrupted to a certain extent Dorothy's routine, but the regular study with her uncle was not interrupted. Dorothy read such books as came her way, seeing those she most wished to read were not always within her reach. She read over and over again Pope's works. She enjoyed reading Hume's *History of England* with her uncle. Mr. Wilberforce gave her a treatise on regeneration. She followed up this entry into theology by reading the New Testament with Doddridge's exposition.

The second spring and summer at Forncett were beautiful as the first. The fields and woods were again full of the melody of birds; the sleepy poppies nodded their scarlet cowl in the shining cornfields; church and home had a gracious peace. Yet Dorothy would find herself now and again restless, unsatisfied, looking at the ardent stretches of colour in the meadows and cornfields as if they troubled her, disturbed as by a sense of unreality, as if what she saw were somehow unreal, flowering out of a shadow world, and as if she were waiting for the shadow to become substance. There were times when she could have beat at the ground with her hands in her impatience. She thought that if William were with her the vague restlessness and dissatisfaction would pass, and that all things around her would have a fuller meaning.

But William was spending his vacation walking in France and Switzerland. He tried, in his letters, to give Dorothy some impression of the beauty and grandeur on which he looked. His letters were Dorothy's chief pleasure. Feeding her poultry or nursing her little cousin or guiding the clumsy fingers of her scholars, she carried with her the memory of words which were a constant source of sweetness to her: "I have thought of you perpetually; and never have my eyes burst upon a scene of particular loveliness but I have almost instantly wished that you could for a moment be transported to the place where I stood, to enjoy it."

She hoped that he would be able to visit her before returning to Cambridge on November 10th, but her hope was in vain. Her joy was all the greater when he visited her in the depths of winter

and was with her on her birthday. Her happiness that Christmas was complete. William was charmed by the life which showed in her every word and movement, and his happiness in her made her happy. His ways had enchantment for her. Little things that he did filled her with delight. His courtesy to her, his eagerness to be with her, his readiness to drop any other pleasure if there was a chance of talking to her, made her feel as if crowned by his love. The violence of his affection was an intense joy to her. They were absorbed in each other. Every morning they walked in the country. Every evening they paced the avenue of limes or up and down the long gravel walk of the garden from four to six, heedless of the whistle of the North wind amongst the trees over their heads, heedless of the cold. Night after night they watched the moonlight on the leaves and grass and on the Rectory meadow where they hoped to build their home. Nothing but rain or snow prevented this twilight pacing, arm locked in arm, and when the snow came there was compensation for their loss. Impressions of beauty sank deep into their hearts. The meadows and the trees of Forncett had then an extraordinary purity and loveliness.

The birth of Christopher put an end to Dorothy's school for a time. She found that the demands of the home left her less and less time for outside work. But she still continued to study and she lived a great deal in the open air. She went riding sometimes on her uncle's pony. She walked at all times, before breakfast, from half-past six to half-past eight, in the mornings, in the afternoon and in the evening. She liked particularly a moonlight or twilight walk. She wrote to Jane: "It is at this time I think most of my absent friends." Chief of the absent friends were now her brothers—steady-going industrious Kit, and quiet handsome John, and William, whose attainments dazzled her. She told Jane that he read Italian, Spanish, French, Greek, Latin and English. Her belief in his powers was steady. But her thoughts about him were beginning to have a touch of anxiety, for she did not see how his love of poetry and beauty were going to earn for him his daily bread.

In June 1791 her mind was full of a suit her guardians were

bringing against Lord Lonsdale, who refused to acknowledge as a debt a sum of £4700 which he had owed to her father. The case was about to come on at the Assizes in Carlisle. If it were unsuccessful they would be left without a farthing. Dorothy hoped that the justice of their cause would carry them through, but she knew that Lord Lonsdale had retained all the best Counsel, and so she braced herself to meet failure. She now felt able to earn her living if necessary, for she had been steadily preparing herself, for teaching, by her studies. She wrote to Jane: "I fear not poverty in my youth, and why should I expect it in age,"; she told Jane at the same time that Grandmother Cookson had been very kind, and had promised each of them £100.

The winter of 1791 passed quietly and happily. Dorothy and her aunt amused themselves at home. They seldom left Forncett. Even a visit to Norwich and an evening at the theatre was something extraordinary. Jane was at this time very happy in her balls and other gaieties. Dorothy wrote to her: "I am living quietly, though very happily . . . without having been out to one ball, one play, one concert. . . ."


The first few months of 1792 were enlivened by a visit from John, who, following the example of his cousin and namesake, Captain John Wordsworth, had chosen to enter the East India Company's marine. John had returned to England in October, and was to sail for the West Indies in May.

In the spring a third baby made its appearance. The house was becoming less and less a house of studious leisure. The baby, William, was baptized on April 13th. The following month Dr. Cookson, who was Canon of Windsor as well as Rector of Forncett, began to talk of going to Windsor for the autumn. On the last day of July the family left Forncett. The next morning they arrived in London, where they spent a week. Dorothy did not take much pleasure in this her first visit to London, though she admired the view from St. Paul's, and the ships on the Thames cutting their way as through green meadows.

On August 9th they reached Windsor. Dorothy was charmed by it. She fancied herself on fairy ground. The country seemed to

her as if brought there by enchantment. The King won her heart by his kindness to the children, who, Dorothy wrote, "though not acquainted with the new-fangled doctrine of liberty and equality, thought a king's stick as good game as any other man's. . . ." He was delighted with little Christopher and Mary, whom he considered quite a beauty. The first time Mary appeared before him she was wearing rather a shabby hat. Her mother and Dorothy got her a new one for her second appearance. "Ah," said the King, "Mary, that's a pretty hat."

Dorothy enjoyed the walks and drives at Windsor, but she did not care for the royal parties and balls. "Do not imagine that I am dazzled by royalty," she wrote to Jane on October 16th. She was by that time longing to return to Farnham. William, who had been in France for almost a year, was expected home. The splendours of society had only seemed to make the thought of his companionship and the quiet life in the country more dear.



CHAPTER V: FORNCETT

Most melancholy at that time, . . .

Were my day-thoughts, my dreams were miserable.

WORDSWORTH.

WILLIAM did not return from France until the end of the year. Then he lingered with their brother Richard, who was in chambers in London. He was preparing for the press the poem he had written at Cambridge and a second poem called *Descriptive Sketches*, in which he wrote of the impressions he had received during his wandering holiday in the summer of 1790. Dorothy thought that these poems contained many passages exquisitely beautiful, and that they showed beyond any question a poet's eye, a poet's imagination and a poet's pencil, but she thought they contained many faults also, such as obscurity and the overworking of certain phrases. She had amused herself with Kit, who had been at Forncett during the Christmas vacation, by analysing every line and preparing along with him a bulky commentary for William's eye.

At the beginning of 1793 she was full of happy anticipation. She took it for granted that William's hesitancies as to the choice of a profession were at an end. She looked forward to the happiness of entertaining Jane for at least a year in the little parsonage which she thought would presently be William's, and for Jane's amusement she planned an attractive scheme of doings for each season. She wrote of the winter evenings: "When I think of winter, I hasten to furnish our little parlour. I close the shutters, set out the tea-table, brighten the fire. When our refreshment is ended, I produce our work, and William brings his book to our table, and contributes at once to our instruction and amusement; and, at intervals, we lay aside the book; and each hazard observations upon what has been read, without the fear of ridicule or censure. We talk over past days. We do not sigh for any pleasures beyond our humble habitation,—'the central place of all our joys.' "

Before the end of February Dorothy knew that she had been over-confident. William wrote to her, a letter that was little but a confession of trouble. He had fallen in love during his stay at Orleans and Blois with Marie Anne Vallon, the daughter of a surgeon of Blois, and had been swept off his feet by the violence of his feeling. Annette had borne him a child in December. He had stayed in France till poverty had forced him home, but he felt bound in honour to return to Annette as soon as possible. He had been lingering in London hoping to raise some money, but had been unsuccessful, and now the declaration of war had put the last touch to his anxieties. Annette was imploring him to return, if only for a day, and he could not get back to her.

Dorothy was in deep distress. Her long-cherished hopes were shattered. Also she feared for William. She knew well the capacity for overpowering feeling which made him irresistible to anyone he loved but which was a torment to himself. She remembered his vehemence, his wildness at times. But above all, she felt pity for Annette, left alone to endure bitter adversity. She did not condemn William for a passing tumult of the blood, but the thought of Annette's trouble wrung her heart. She wrote at once to the French girl, whom William already, it was clear, regarded not as his mistress, but as his wife. She tried to write so as to convey a sense of welcome, of support, and of reassurance, but she was in such distress and confusion of feeling that the letter was far from an easy one to write.

A task even more difficult awaited her, to break the news of William's indiscretion to one who would never understand it. William wished her to acquaint Dr. Cookson with his plight and his obligations. Dorothy, who knew that Uncle William was already out of patience with William's delays and indecisions, feared to reveal this heavy trouble. Shrinking from the task, she at length summoned courage to speak of William's difficulties and anxieties. It was as she feared. She gained nothing by explaining to her uncle what had happened. William seemed to Dr. Cookson unforgivably selfish, careless, self-indulgent and imprudent. He would be most unwelcome at the Rectory.

Left to fend for himself, he passed his days in miserable uncertainty and unhappiness, tormented by the thought of Annette's plight, deeply humiliated at being unable to protect those who were dependent on him. No more was said of his taking orders. He sought a post as tutor or travelling companion, but was not successful. For about a month he was on the Isle of Wight, desolately watching the vessels bound for France.

Dorothy remained at Forncett, forced through her championship of William into some estrangement from her uncle. She felt keenly the uncertainty of the future. In June she wrote to Jane: "All is still obscure and dark." As others drew away from William, whose confession of unhappy passion and of trouble had awakened in her the deepest tenderness, her loyalty deepened and her love caught fire. Sometimes she knew that an extravagance of feeling made it difficult for her to judge clearly. She could no longer view William or his actions dispassionately. Indeed she could only recall him through a kind of haze which obscured and yet intensified his personality. In July she wrote to Jane: "Perhaps you reply, 'But I know how blinded you are!' Well, my dearest, I plead guilty at once; I *must* be blind; he cannot be so pleasing as my fondness makes him." But yet she felt that William had given her the most exquisite reasons for her unreasoning love. He had given her a kind of intense and close devotion which no one had ever given her before. He had valued in her those feelings which others regarded so little that she habitually tried to conceal them. He had told her that he found her conversation bewitching. He had made her feel that he needed her. She wrote: "He was never tired of comforting his sister; he never left her in anger; he always met her with joy; he preferred her society to any other pleasure—or rather, . . . he had no pleasure when we were compelled to be divided."

Her dreams of a snug parsonage were over. But she still hoped that somewhere, somehow, William and she would be able to have a cottage together. As soon as she thought of this, she saw the garden at once full of honeysuckle and roses, the flowers that sprang from nowhere to meet her desire, and a pleasant wood to

give shade in summer and shelter in winter. Her craving for a home of her own grew ever and ever stronger.

She heard constantly from William. She was glad when in August he started on tour in the West of England with one of his Penrith friends, William Calvert. The tour, all the expenses of which were to have been borne by Calvert, came to an untimely end when the horse dragged the whisky in which they travelled into a ditch in Salisbury Plain. Then "William's fine friends, a pair of good legs," as Dorothy called them, laughing over the mishap, supported him from Salisbury Plain through South Wales into a delightful vale in Denbighshire, in which Jones, the companion of the tour in France and Switzerland, had a pleasant cottage. Dorothy was glad to think of him as settled for a time under a hospitable and friendly roof.

She was now planning to be at Halifax at Christmas time, and William was to meet her there. It was understood between them that if anything upset this plan, such as his going to France or taking up work that would prevent his coming to Halifax, he would insist on coming to Farncott to see her, even for a day.

As the year wore on, Dorothy's longing to be with him grew more and more intense. She loved her uncle and aunt and was grateful to them for their affection, but she felt more and more that, kind as they were to her, she could not share with them many of her feelings or of her keenest pleasures. They were dear to her, but their ways were not her ways, nor their thoughts her thoughts. Their coldness to William, their failure to see, although he could give no good account of himself, that there was in him the stirring of some kind of power and gift, that he had some kind of troubled insight and brilliance, increased her sense of this lack of anything like positive sympathy. Her little cousins too were dear to her, Mary and Christopher and William and the baby George. But she had at times the feeling, almost painful to her, that she was not actually necessary to any of them, or to any of those by whom she was surrounded. They did not need her, and it was a distress to her to be separated from the one being on earth whose heart

beat in tune with hers, whose need for her was imperious and whose nature could absorb and satisfy her own. The succession of days in Forncett had become meaningless; the round of practical duties, unyoked to any deep feeling, lacked reality. Always she was conscious of waiting for reality, of waiting for the fullness and brightness and swiftness that life could have when it was shared with one who had power over her spirit and over whom she had power. She felt more and more that the peace of this flat temperate country was not her peace. She would remember with a rush of feeling the moorland pools and the hills, the Lowther woods whose beautiful forest pathways she had been free to explore with William in the rich light of evening, the wild and rugged and precipitous places in which she had found a sense of kinship and rest. She was shaken with longing for the North.

The first dream of a home with William had been shattered; but one thing was blessedly clear to her. Annette or no Annette, William still loved her with a love that the sudden fits of passion could not touch. He longed for her and needed her, and just because he needed her he could give her fullness of life. Nothing at all mattered in comparison with that.

The little ones could hardly understand that Cousin Dolly was going away. Cousin Dolly had been part of their world from the beginning. Her aunt was sorry to lose her companion in work and play, in house and garden, in walking and visiting. Uncle William told her he would miss her sadly. The nursemaid had tears in her eyes when the time came for saying good-bye.

Dorothy too felt keenly the pang of parting, but having made her choice she was eager to go. She had left the North for the South, seeking haven. Now she was rested and eager to push out into the full sea of life. The uncertainties of fortune that were buffeting William were but as winds that filled her sails.



CHAPTER I: HALIFAX AND THE NORTH

A Ladie on rough waues, row'd in a sommer barge.

“THE FAERIE QUEENE.”

DOROTHY knew even as she set out for Halifax that the lives of her friends there had altered so that she could no longer hope to find in it an abiding home although it had many pleasant resting-places in which she was always welcome. Shortly after she had left, Cousin Edward had become the manager to Mr. William Rawson, a manufacturer, who lived at Mill House in the Ryburn Valley. Her aunt had gone to keep house for him in the cottage called Bullace Trees, near Mill House. In the spring of 1791 she had married Mr. Rawson.

She was eager to have Dorothy with her for a long visit, and she was delighted to receive William, of whose genius and whose misfortunes Dorothy had told her.

Dorothy had no sooner arrived than she was surrounded by friends. Her Ferguson and Threlkeld cousins and the Pollard family especially gave her a delighted welcome. Edward Ferguson, whom she much liked, was still in Bullace Trees. Dorothy thought that his cottage, with its low rooms, its beamed ceilings, and its delightful windows looking on to the Norland moors, was charming, and more homelike than Mill House itself, pleasant as it too was with its large flower garden, trim even in winter, and its green lawn.

William joined her shortly after her arrival at Mill House. Dorothy had written a great deal about him to all her friends, yet she felt that she had given but a slight impression of him. It was an intense pleasure to her to have him with her, so that those who had accused her of extravagance in her descriptions of him could judge for themselves. But William had altered greatly since she had seen him at the end of 1791. He was no longer the passionately hopeful dreamer he had been. During the autumn he had succeeded in getting across to France. He had returned

horror-stricken at the atrocities of the First Terror. The ugliness that had leapt to the surface during the troubling of the waters caused by the Revolution left him shaken and aghast. When he came to Dorothy he was torn by humiliation and remorse, sickened by the world's vanity and cruelty, haunted by the sorrows of the broken people he had met, tortured by some inability in himself to mate and master the stormy times. His day-thoughts were melancholy, his sleep was broken by visions of despair and tyranny, by dreams in which he pled always, in vain, before unjust tribunals, against the injustices he saw. A sense of guilt oppressed him. His impotence made him feel as if somehow he were a traitor to all he held most dear.

Dorothy's faith in him alone gave him hope and healing.

Presently there came an offer from Raisley Calvert of quarters at the farm of Windy Brow, near Keswick. William was eager to accept the offer, and indeed Dorothy, happy as she was with her friends, felt that this was a golden opportunity of spending some time alone with William. The name of the farm suggested that it was just the kind of retreat that would be most delightful to them. But first of all they had some visits to pay. They went to Whitehaven to pay their respects to Uncle Richard, whom they promised to visit again later in the year. From Whitehaven they went to Kendal to see some of the Cookson relatives. Then their time of freedom began, and they pleased themselves by walking from Kendal to Grasmere, glorying in their liberty and fellowship. As they passed the lakes of Rydal and Grasmere the rich yellow light of evening lay on the waters and the islands were reflected in the lovely amber glow. They rested for a moment or two above Grasmere to look at the slopes of Silver How and the fantastic brooding summit of Helm Crag and the glow of colour in the inverted arch of the Dunmail gap. Dorothy felt all at once that the moment was full of exquisite life. The hills and the sky, the solemn beauty of the waters, the sounds of the evening, the silences—filled her with their peace. She too was drawn into the infinitude in which all those things were merged and harmonized, in a union completely satisfying.

She knew that she would always love the little village and the road along the lakes that led to it.

When they left Grasmere they walked to Keswick through country which Dorothy thought the most delightful she had ever seen. Windy Brow was half a mile from Keswick. There they spent about six weeks in April and May, enjoying the beauty of the vale of Keswick in the spring, and the towering companionship of Skiddaw. Studying, reading, walking and talking together, they were entirely happy. Their poverty gave an added keenness to the happiness they were snatching. Their breakfast and supper were of milk, their dinner consisted chiefly of potatoes, and they drank no tea. It amused them to see how far they could cut down the necessities of living, and yet be happy. A slight shadow was cast on their happiness by the disapproval of some of their relatives. Uncle Kit's wife wrote to protest against their way of living, and censured very severely the "rambling about the country on foot." Dorothy did not let this criticism disturb her very much. She contented herself with replying that by walking she had received a great deal of pleasure and saved at least thirty shillings. But there was one part of her aunt's letter which angered her to the heart, for it insinuated that William was not a fitting guardian for her and that his friends were not the most fitting companions. To this Dorothy replied: ". . . I affirm that I consider the character and virtues of my brother as a sufficient protection." She insisted not only on the pleasure it was to her to be with William but on the privilege it was to be with one from whom she could learn so much.

She was studying French along with William and was making very rapid progress, for she was eager to speak poor Annette's language easily. She also, now that she had someone to help her, began the study of Italian.

On leaving Windy Brow they went to Whitehaven, where they spent part of May and June. As they passed through Cockermouth they visited their childhood's home. The sight of the neat terrace in ruin and the terrace walk all choked up with the old hedge in which roses and privet had intermingled and in which the sparrows had nested, caught at their hearts in some nameless way. It was

curious to compare their memories of a world clear and shining with the dimmed and dulled reality. Only the river and the slip of road seen over the hedge were yet unchanged.

Dorothy after leaving Whitehaven spent some time with Aunt Crackanthorpe and Uncle Kit. William went to Penrith, where he lodged with Mrs. Sowerby at the Robin Hood Inn. He gave most of his time to Raisley Calvert, who was ill and who needed constant attendance and companionship. In August he went to Lancashire, but on his return he found Calvert too ill to be left alone. All his care could not save his friend, who died at Penrith in the beginning of January 1795.

Before returning to Halifax, Dorothy paid a long visit to the dear and faithful friend of the Penrith days, Mary Hutchinson, now keeping house for her brother Tom at the farm of Sockburn, a grazing farm, six miles from Darlington, watered nearly round by the Tees, and stocked with sheep. In the spring William joined her there and renewed his friendship with the Hutchinson family. They passed their time most pleasantly, riding, walking, reading, playing at ball in the meadow. In all his wanderings at home and abroad William had found no place which pleased him as well as this great farmhouse set in a meadow green as an emerald. The slow farm ways, all their suggestion of stability and of the quiet unfolding of life, had for him, shaken as he was by violent memories, a singular reassurance and charm. This life was not blown hither and thither by passions and ideas, but founded on primal things.

The fireside and its spinning-wheel, the faces of the Hutchinson men and women as they gathered round the flames in the evenings, the presence of Dorothy, brown as a gipsy from her wanderings and almost startling in her speech and movements among these quieter people with whom yet he was well content, made him feel that this was home indeed. France and its miseries faded from his mind. The image of Annette receded. Mary Hutchinson seemed to him the soul of England and the soul of home.

When Dorothy returned to Halifax in the summer, Jane was busy with preparations for her marriage with Mr. John Marshall of

Leeds. The marriage was to take place on August 5th, and in the meantime the girls, happy in being together again, saw as much of each other as possible. Exploring the Norland moors and rambling in the woods that adjoined the grounds of Mill House, they relived the pleasures of their early years and talked much about the future. Ever since January Dorothy had been pondering ways and means. Raisley Calvert, by leaving William a legacy of £900, had rescued them from much uneasy uncertainty. A great deal could be done with this legacy if William and she had the courage of their desires and were prudent. Dorothy was determined that William should drift no longer. She had heard him say too often: "What is to become of me I know not," and she feared lest drifting might be the ruin of his life and powers. She thought that with the legacy as their chief resource they might challenge fortune, all the more so because William, who had been staying for a time with his friend Basil Montagu in London, had been invited to become the tenant of a house in Dorset by one of Montagu's friends, John Pinney, the son of a rich Bristol merchant.

She was impatient for William to accept this offer. It was a joyful day for her when, on September 7th, the inventory of the house was signed. The air was full of the last departing songs of birds, and the bracken was already turning golden as she made her preparations for travelling to the South. But Dorothy was glad at heart as one who was at the beginning of new life. At last William and she were to know the sweetness of making and sharing a home.



CHAPTER II: RACEDOWN

*Beneath the starres, upon yon Meteor
Ever hang my fate, mongst things corruptible
I ne're could pluck it from him, . . .*

“THE CHANGELING.”

JOYFULLY Dorothy faced the problem of making ends meet. It was a delight to her to match her wits against the bareness of her resources. She reckoned as her certainties—a house rent-free lent on the easiest conditions, the income that would come from William's legacy, the £50 allowed by Basil Montagu for his son's board. William did one thing, showing such trust in her and care for her that it filled her heart with sweetness. He proposed to sink upon her life half of his small legacy, to make her comfortable and independent.

Then there were possibilities. Dorothy hoped that her cousin Tom Myers would send her his daughter, aged three and a half years, to be mothered and educated. Mr. Pinney of Bristol spoke of sending a thirteen-year-old son, who would be William's charge. There was also the chance that William might earn something from writing.

On the other hand, they both felt keenly that they must from time to time, as opportunity offered, render assistance to Annette and the little Caroline, and this would be no small drain upon their tiny income.

Dorothy reckoned at first that their income should be over £170, but she reckoned too hopefully. Tom Myers did not, after all, send his daughter. This was very disappointing to Dorothy, who had been looking forward eagerly to taking care of a little girl. And Mr. Pinney did not send his son. William was not sorry for this, and shortly afterwards he gave up the idea of taking pupils. Somehow he felt no confidence in his ability to teach. And it seemed to him that he had not enough knowledge to justify his turning schoolmaster. He told his friend Francis Wrangham that

his teaching scheme might "be suffered to fly quietly away to the paradise of fools."

He earned nothing by his pen.

So they were very poor, too poor to take in any new books, magazines or reviews, or even to accept unfranked letters. William warned his friends that if they sent unfranked letters he could not release them from the post office.

He was grateful when Wrangham offered to send him *The Morning Chronicle*.

Their diet—he said—half laughing and half grumbling, was chiefly air and the essence of carrots, cabbages and turnips.

Parsley they had in plenty from the garden.

Dorothy was quick to get the machinery of living into such order as would leave her a good deal of free time. The house, a three-storied building, ample and perhaps a trifle gloomy, was too large to be managed without assistance, but she was fortunate in finding a servant who was one of the nicest girls. William had his share of outside work—of digging and delving and rooting up hedges. He told Wrangham, to whom he often wrote, that he was suffering "the penalty of Adam." They were both diligent in their efforts to make the most of the garden. "We plant cabbages," William wrote to his friend William Mathews, "and if retirement, in its full perfection, be as powerful in working transformations as one of Ovid's gods, you may perhaps suspect that into cabbages we shall be transformed." Dorothy thought he handled the spade with great dexterity.

He was also kept busy with the hewing of wood, for they were quick to realize that coals were dear in Dorsetshire. When guests came, they too took a share in the hewing of wood, for the fine blazing fires which Dorothy kept to warm the gloomy house consumed an enormous quantity of blocks. John Pinney, the most pleasant of guests, and his brother ⁸⁵⁰Charles proved to be excellent at cleaving of wood, when they spent the Christmas of 1795 at Racedown. Dorothy looked on approvingly: "a very desirable employment and what all young housekeepers would do well to recommend to the young men of their household in such a cold

country as this, for it produces warmth both within and without doors." she wrote, when describing their doings to Jane. For the rest, William and his guests amused themselves chiefly out of doors walking and riding, hunting and coursing.

Basil took up more of Dorothy's time than the light housekeeping. At first he was difficult to manage. William got impatient with him. "He lies like a little devil," said he one day, after he had been trying to extract the truth of something from Basil. Dorothy was tenderer to the child's peculiarities. She had her own way of training the nervous, spoiled, unhappy little fellow. Beyond seeing that he knew his letters she did not try to make him learn from books, but left him, when she realized that he had an insatiable curiosity, to learn unconsciously through his senses. She tried to answer his numerous questions about the things he observed in his walks with her, the sky, the fields, the trees, the shrubs, the carts of the farmers, the tools, the animals—all that he noticed in the life of the countryside. She wanted him to be hardy. She saw with pleasure his growing hardiness, his indifference to rain and wind, his happiness as his nervous fears and fretful moods passed away.

She kept most of her time for William. They spent many of the mornings walking. The country was a keen pleasure to them both. It had not the luxuriance of Devon, but it had character. The stunted appearance of the trees, many of which were turned away from the sea, seemed to them that winter to give it a curious touch, half repellent, of desolateness and hardness. But the cottages, poor structures of wood and clay though they were, had yet, when hidden in the valleys and revealing their lurking-places only by wreaths of white smoke, a contrasting suggestion of cheerfulness and comfort, even of beauty; the views of the sea were fine; the meadows above the tops of the coombes were lovely, and the hills, seen from a distance, almost took on the character of mountains, Dorothy told herself. The coming-on of spring took away the suggestion of bleakness. Daffodils appeared in abundance: in May the apple blossom was everywhere; and in summer the hills were glorious with broom. There was delight for eye and ear. And in

the summer evenings, the scents, of honeysuckle and roses and stocks, were of heaven. William had practically no sense of smell; and Dorothy, catching the sudden gusts of evening fragrance, often felt sorry over what he missed. One evening she was delighted when, bending over a bed of stocks in full bloom, he was suddenly startled by the sweetness of their scent. He said it was like a vision of Paradise.

Dorothy and he read a good deal together. They got through a number of English books and some Italian. William longed for additional books, especially those he had left behind in London at Montagu's. He longed most of all for Gilpin's tour into Scotland and his Northern tour, valued books which Montagu had talked of lending and which he feared would follow the way of lent books in not being returned. As they were expensive he would not be able to replace them if they were lost; and so he was very uneasy about them.

Dorothy was happy in her quiet life. She wrote to Jane in March 1797: "The dreams of our ardent imaginations have not proved shadowy." She loved Racedown with peculiar affection because she regarded it as her first home. Until coming to it she had often had a painful feeling that she had never been actually necessary to anyone. It was a delight to her to feel that now she was the maker of a home.

William was less happy and confident. He was writing a good deal, and Dorothy was reading what he wrote and helping him by her suggestions and criticism, but his writing was not of the kind he would have wished to do. His restlessness, his feeling that the times were out of joint, his dissatisfaction with the universe, were driving him into satire. He intended to publish, jointly with Francis Wrangham, the fruits of his splenetic mood, with the title *Imitations of Juvenal*. He was at work too on a tragedy. Thoughts of the wastage of war and the cruel futility of the penal laws disturbed him. Now and again, as he brooded over these things, he worked at a poem in which the desolation of Salisbury Plain was the setting for the greater desolation of the broken creatures, victims of the machinery of civilization, who suffered upon it. In a moment of anger over the cruelty of the penal laws he worked

at *The Convict*. When the mood of pity was uppermost, he turned to another poem which he was writing, called *The Ruined Cottage*.

But he was not quite happy in his work. He had a troubled feeling that he was writing without a clear conception of what he wished to do, and without illumination. He had been reading with great care Godwin's *Political Justice*, and its clear way of bringing all things to the test of reason troubled him. The things in his life which he had most valued, his momentary raptures and exaltations, his sense of communion with the unseen, would not stand this test. Feeling that he could not explain them, or rationalize them, he half felt that he should discard them from his scheme of things, as unreal. Yet when he did this, he had little left by which to live. He felt cut off from the sources of his strength.

Other things pressed upon him. His dreams were still flecked with memories of violence seen and heard; he was worried about Annette, whose letters were a constant reminder that the problem of his future was merely shelved, not solved; and the insecurity of his fortune at times troubled him greatly, and sapped his courage. Also the seclusion of his life weighed upon him. He had not been used to so much solitude, and he felt as if it tried him beyond his strength. There were times when he feared that he could not prevent his life from becoming stagnant. He still wished to write, yet still obscurely. Much of what he wished to say was far beyond his reach of words.

He was conscious, in these days of doubting and fear, that his surest anchor was Dorothy's unswerving faith in his power to write and in the value of his writing, her constant assurance that if he accepted the poet's task he was doing the work it was given him to do and that he need not break his heart over the work it was not in his power to do.

Dorothy, conscious of the pressure of solitude upon him and of the self-consuming thoughts into which he was all too ready to fall, was always glad to welcome visitors to Racedown, and her guests enjoyed themselves in spite of the simplicity of the fare offered to them. The Pinneys on their frequent visits found the evenings with talk and books in her sitting-room no less pleasant

than the mornings spent out of doors. In March 1797, Basil Montagu, playing with his little Basil, made the house ring with noise and laughter. When he left on the 19th Dorothy missed him very much. She wrote: "Montagu is so cheerful and made us so merry that we hardly know how to bear the change." But, for her, William was always the soul of the house, no matter what his mood might be. His brief absences left a blank in her days, even when, as in 1797, she had the constant companionship of Mary Hutchinson, who was paying her a long visit.

At the beginning of June she was expecting a visitor of whom she had heard much to interest her. This was Mr. Coleridge, a young poet who had read William's poems and found something forceful and new in them, and whose acquaintance William had made at Bristol. As Mr. Coleridge was walking from Taunton they were not sure of the exact time of his arrival. On the evening of the 5th Dorothy and Mary saw a pale thin youth swinging along through the scented honeysuckle lane. As they watched they saw him leap over a gate to cut off an angle, and come impulsively towards them across a pathless field. That night they all felt a quickening of life. William forgot his own doubts and fears and the discords of humanity. He found himself talking to the pale new-comer as he had never talked to anyone before. Presently he began to read, or rather to chant, part of *The Ruined Cottage*. When he stopped, Mr. Coleridge in return read part of a tragedy called *Osorio*. Mary Hutchinson felt as if a new world had opened around her. Dorothy, listening intent to the rich sweet voice and watching the thick lips of the reader, the angel brow and eyes under rough black hair, wondered how she could ever have thought plain, even for a moment, a face that was full of light.

Gold dust of poetry rained from heaven upon them all.

This passing apostle of freedom, poor as themselves and insecure as themselves, had walked from the road into their lives carelessly, like a passer-by, girt for travelling and staff in hand as if ready to pass out again. Yet they all knew that it had only taken his coming to make the solitary place blossom as the rose.



CHAPTER III: ALFOXDEN

A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

“PROVERBS OF HELL.”

AFTER Mary Hutchinson's departure Mr. Coleridge returned to Racedown, eager to persuade William and Dorothy to go with him to Nether Stowey, where he had settled to be near his greatest friend, Tom Poole the tanner. He brushed all difficulties aside. Wordsworth could walk. For Miss Wordsworth and Basil he had brought with him Poole's one-horse chaise. There was no resisting him.

On July 2nd he set out with Dorothy and Basil. He was delighted at having achieved his end. Basil was in ecstasies. As for Dorothy, she might have been cutting through the air in a winged chariot, she might have been cleaving the sea in a magic bark instead of jogging over the fifty miles of rough and muddy roads between Racedown and Nether Stowey, so swift and joyous were her thoughts. As she sat by the strange being who had come like a meteor into her life, and who when he talked could annihilate time and space, she wondered what kind of a woman the wife of such a man could be, and what his child would be like.

David Hartley proved to be a very tiny but extraordinarily fascinating baby; a “minute philosopher,” his father called him. Mrs. Coleridge was pretty and pleasant, and made them wonderfully comfortable, although with a good deal of bustle, in her little house with its very primitive kitchen and its two dark parlours looking on to the street. Coleridge took them out through the back door to his orchard and pointed out the gate Tom Poole had made at the end of it, so that it was just a step for them to go into his garden and through the tan-yard into his house—or through the orchard and over a meadow into the garden of their friends the Cruikshanks. They saw that he was as much at home under

Tom Poole's trees or talking to Poole and his mother in the great windy parlour as he was by his own fireside.

Most of the time they were out of doors. Dorothy found the country divine and wild. She wrote to Mary Hutchinson saying that the brooks were "clear and pebbly as in Cumberland" and the woods "as fine as those at Lowther." She admired especially the grounds of Alfoxden House, with their dell and their brook and their pleasing wildness.

On the 7th a very old friend of Coleridge joined the party. This was Charles Lamb, still heavily overshadowed by strange calamities that had overwhelmed his family. He was a clerk in the East India House, and had only a week's holiday, so Coleridge was eager to accompany him everywhere and show him as much of the country at its best as could be seen in so short a time. Alas, on the morning of Lamb's arrival, Mrs. Coleridge, busy and hurried, spilt a skillet full of boiling milk over her husband's foot, and Lamb, shy and tongue-tied, had only Dorothy and William as the companions of his walks, while Coleridge stayed at home, conversing with them in his mind, and putting some of his thoughts into what he called conversational verse. He could not help wishing that everything might be a shade more beautiful than usual while poor Charles was in the country:

Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean!

Lamb enjoyed himself during his explorings in spite of his shyness. Indeed the week was a very happy one for him. Mrs. Coleridge treated him with a kind of bustling kindness which suited his mood and touched and comforted him curiously. She liked him very much. She was far more at home with this old friend than she was as yet with the new friends whom Samuel had conjured out of the wilds of Dorsetshire and for whom he seemed to feel a kind of idolatrous admiration that puzzled her. She

thought Wordsworth somewhat forbidding and cold; and Miss Wordsworth, with her passion for walking and her gipsy look of joy or wildness, with her quick glancing movements that made the small dark rooms seem like a prison, with her long odd silences and occasional bursts of vehement speech, seemed to her not "exquisite" as Samuel had said, but unwomanly to a disconcerting extent. When Charles Lamb and Samuel talked of old times, and exchanged reminiscences of their school-days, she was amused and interested. When Samuel and the Wordsworths talked about poetry and imagination, diction and metre, sunlight and shadow and the external appearances of things, philosophy and religion—she hardly knew what they were talking about or why they were filled with excitement.

Lamb left on the 14th, very sorry to go. They were all amused at the rueful note in the letter he sent from London. He had forgotten his great-coat, and in his letter to Coleridge he wrote: ". . . is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great-coat lingering so cunningly behind?"

When Lamb left, Dorothy and William were still Mrs. Coleridge's guests, but they were preparing to depart. Through a stroke of fairy luck and the help of Coleridge's eloquence they had secured for a year the mansion house of Alfoxden whose grounds pleased them so well. The house was so large that Coleridge, writing to his friend Robert Southey that month, was able to convey to him Wordsworth's hospitable offer of "a suite of rooms." It had been sub-let by its tenant at the nominal rent of £23.

Its situation was perfect. The front looked on to a hill covered with irregular clumps of trees and topped with fern, and the sea was visible from its end. Deer and sheep abounded on the hill. Dorothy's favourite sitting-room looked on to the garden. Near the house was a wood with a fine holly grove. In the glen at the bottom of the wood, a quarter of a mile from the house, was a waterfall very beautiful to see and enticing in the hot July days.

On the 16th they went to Alfoxden. Thelwall, arriving at Nether Stowey on the 17th, found Mrs. Coleridge busy and bustling,

superintending a large washing—no light work, for the water had to be carried from a well in the back yard—and struggling, along with Nanny the maid, with the arrears of household work.

Coleridge was already enjoying a change of air at Alfoxden.

Mrs. Coleridge accompanied Thelwall to Alfoxden on the 18th. The moss roses were then at their loveliest, the garden was in its pride of bloom. Thelwall was affected by the beauty and peace. As they sat in the glen beside the waterfall, Coleridge remarked: "This is a place to reconcile one to all the jarrings and conflicts of the wide world." "Nay," replied Thelwall, "to make one forget them altogether."

There followed upon the settlement in Alfoxden exquisite days in which William, Dorothy and Coleridge all drank deep of life. William was happier than he had ever been. As he talked to Coleridge, he saw how wrong he had been in distrusting his experience because it could not be interpreted by another man's philosophy, and in trying to constrict his own life to the pattern of another's. He realized that it was his task to make from his experience his own philosophy. Much that had been obscure hitherto became suddenly clear to him. Experiences that had remained obstinately in his mind, yet isolated and unexplained, seemed suddenly shining with meaning; slight things which had thrilled or interested him, but for being interested in which he had half blamed himself, as for falling into triviality, were bathed in an illumination which showed them to be parts of a mighty whole: the feeling with which Nature filled him became a revelation which it was his life-work to communicate to his fellow-men. He learned to regard his own spiritual life with detachment, as a phenomenon of which he could write without egoism. He had found a way of looking at life which gave unity to all he wrote and thought. He was at peace in a kind of divine passiveness. It was like new life to him to be free from the restrictions he had been imposing upon himself—to feel that there was a pattern of experience, jewelled and distinct, in much that had seemed confused, unrelated and inexplicable, and that his was a dedicated spirit, expressly chosen and prepared for the revelation of this pattern.

Coleridge, even as he illuminated William's experience, and taught him to have the courage of the vision given to him, was himself learning something from the purity and intensity of those reactions to Nature, and from the rough sincerity of the record that had been kept of them. William's feeling for Nature interested him, and to some extent communicated itself to him. Dorothy's, which seemed to him quite different, and much more impersonal, interested him still more. There was enchantment for him in his walks with Dorothy. It seemed to him, as Dorothy walked beside him, swift, half stooping, that her eyes saw through the superficial appearance of things piercingly, making nothing of the conventional distinction of beauty and ugliness, but penetrating beyond superficialities to a something in all created things that held her spirit in contemplation of its mystery. The leafless boughs—the bare trees—he noted, were to her no less dear than the fair trees in full leaf. She would stop to note the exact and lively rough green of the turnips with as much interest as she would note the rich bloom of the heath-flowers. The colour of a red tuft of wool caught in a fence would set her musing. In the sheer form and texture of things she found something that fed her heart and fired her imagination. Coleridge spoke of this to William, who replied that he had been like Dorothy when he was younger, that colour and form had given him complete satisfaction without causing him to make any further attempt to correlate what he saw with any theory of the universe. But Coleridge was not satisfied; there was a difference somewhere between the sensual enjoyment of which William spoke and Dorothy's absorption. Her eyes were not lit up by the mere sensual preoccupation of youth. There was infinity in her gaze. But he could not learn her secret. Her directness and simplicity eluded him. What did she see when she looked at a flower or a plant? Did her eyes pierce to the mystery of life itself?

Dorothy could not explain what she felt in these days when she gave herself over, as never before, to feeling. She only knew that at last she was not thinking about life, but living. She was no longer a lonely and isolated watcher of the silver stream of being, but one absorbed into the swift-running waters. She was happy

in this absorption, happy for the time to lose identity, in the ecstasy of being. To note the ridges of the hills fringed with wood and showing the sea through the fringe like the white sky; to look upon the large white sea swelled on a night of moonlight to the very shores; to watch the moon until it looked like a many-coloured earth and sea; to walk in the woods when the wind was blowing and see one-half of the woods quite still, as if the trees were listening to the gusty music made by their swaying brethren; to hear the nightingales after rain; to see a glow-worm shine out of the dusk—these things, shared with William and Coleridge, were all the perfection of experience and union. Or to lie upon the turf with Coleridge, listening to the tinkling of the sheep bells in the coombes, watching the landscape until its outlines dimmed and it melted into a vision of more than mortal loveliness—this was happiness, precious, flame-like, transitory, mysterious.

The happiness of all three was felt by those who came into contact with them, even although its sources were not understood. Cottle, who visited Nether Stowey in July, realized that he was in touch with lives that were brimful of beauty. He felt that some magic wand had been at work, making of the most ordinary things vessels of delight. The brown mug set on the table in Poole's garden had, he said, "downright witchery in it." The bread and cheese he pronounced like "nothing in the wide terrene." While ordinary things were transfigured, the beautiful things of the country seemed to him to have an added beauty as he sat in Poole's garden. Sunbeams dappled the table; the birds sang as if it were spring; the breezes were heavy with fragrance; butterflies gilded the sunshine. The happiness that warmed the air sank into the heart, pressing upon it, overbrimming it with sweetness.

As William's favourite season, the autumn, drew on, brilliant with colour and laden with fruits and sweet with the farewell notes of birds, the only shadow upon this happiness, apart from the anxiety which they felt at moments owing to their insecurity of fortune, was the disapproval of some of their country neighbours, who found something strange in their way of living. The shadow

touched Dorothy and William lightly, but it saddened Coleridge, who felt that it typified the hatred of the world for those who lived the life of the spirit. "The aristocrats seem to persecute *even Wordsworth*," he wrote to Thelwall. In their glad freedom they now and again acted with a touch of exaggeration that seemed to their neighbours like perversity, as when they set out to walk to Linton late in the afternoon of a November day, when the light in the sky was sullen and the clouds were trembling and obscure. But the day suited their mood. William and Coleridge were planning to write a poem together to defray the expenses of the walk. Coleridge's mind was in labour with a strange dream he had heard from his friend Cruikshank, and which he thought of making the subject of the poem. William, listening to him eagerly, began to speak of a great black sea-bird of which he had just been reading in Shelvock's *Voyage*, and which he thought might well be made part of the fantastic tale.

2

At the close of November Dorothy and William travelled to London on the top of the coach. William had been advised to visit London to make some alterations in *The Borderers*, then under consideration by Harris. For about three weeks they remained in London, but the play was in the end rejected. On December 15th they set out from The White Horse, Piccadilly, on their return journey. After spending a few days with their friends in Bristol, they arrived at Alfoxden, both of them very glad to be home again.

They missed Coleridge very much after their return. He was at Shrewsbury, ministering to a Unitarian congregation, and with his going, some of the richness of the life at Alfoxden had departed. On the evening of January 30th William called Dorothy into the garden to look at the singular appearance in the moonlit sky of a perfect rainbow enclosing one vivid star. It was beautiful, but even beauty, unshared with Coleridge, had not the full power to move.

At the beginning of February Coleridge returned to them. He had accepted an annuity of £150, which his friends the Wedg-

woods had offered to him and which was sufficient to relieve him from the anxiety he felt as to the means of procuring bread and cheese for his family. One of his chief reasons for rejoicing in his freedom was that he was now able to live near William and Dorothy.

The close companionship of the previous summer was renewed, and now the simplest acts of their daily life had pleasure. It was a joy to begin the day as they lingered at the breakfast table by listening to the gay shrewish notes of the redbreasts that came through the windows open on the mild February mornings: sometimes the larks mingled their singing with this thin warbling. It was a joy to walk on the Quantocks before the sun had pierced the grey sky, to see the distant country purple in the clear dull air and the Welsh hills capped by tumultuous clouds. But indeed most things had joy. Dorothy found it sweet, walking with Coleridge from day to day, to watch the small busy spinners of the morning spinning their silver webs all along the way to Nether Stowey, to find one day the hazels in blossom, the honeysuckles budding and the furze gay with colour, to come across the first strawberry blossom, to stop to listen to the choir invisible of birds singing in the mists and teach Coleridge to distinguish between the notes, to see the roads shining like water in the moonlight and the planet Venus like another moon.

On March 23rd Coleridge came to them with the poem based on the dream of which they had talked on the way to Watchet, finished at last. He had called it *The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*. After he had read it, they accompanied him part of the way home. The phrases of the poem were ringing in Dorothy's ears, making passionate echoes, as she looked at the starry sky and the horned moon. Another phrase lingered too. Coleridge, feeling that there was something of the life of all three of them in the poem, had said that they were but one soul. This was exquisite to hear.

And it was true. Impressions sank more deeply into this one soul than they had hitherto done into each of the three souls that met in it. It was gradually becoming half the life of each of the three to capture these impressions, delicate, brilliant and fleeting,

before the glow had faded and the brightness had dulled. William was from day to day in a tumult of feeling as he strove for expression. The sweetness of the first mild spring day, the singing of the redbreast in the larch that was just putting forth its green, the sleepy stirring of birds in the twilight before the dawn, the happy birds fluttering in the grove in the sunshine, the fantastic suggestion of a stunted thorn seen on the hills on a stormy day, even the dear quaintness of the asses pasturing in quiet under the hollies would set him muttering fragments of verse that tyrannized over him until he had given them form. Sometimes what was immediately before him helped him, in an unexpected, almost fantastical way, to express the experience of the past. As he watched the fawns in the groves at Alfoxden he suddenly found words for the feeling of lament, piercing yet obscure, with which the fate of the little girl lost at Sterne Mill Bridge had affected him:

You yet may spy the Fawn at play,
The Hare upon the Green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

Chance human contacts affected him with the same keenness. The stab of pain given him by an old man's gratitude for a slight service, the recollection of a little girl's positiveness, the pity he felt for an old worker or shepherd, would catch at him, giving him no peace until he had expressed his sense of universal brotherhood. Chance impressions from books acted on him in the same way, or even chance phrases heard from those about him, seeming to him to contain in them mysteriously some of the rhythm of life. Tom Poole repeated to him some words uttered by an idiot boy:

The Cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold—

and the perfect topsy-turvydom of the words, giving him almost a pang of pleasure, set him at work on a fantasy of moonshine and madness. It seemed as if all he met had some clue to the infinite which set his imagination at work. The wandering cloud, the leaves swayed by the passing breeze, were intimations of immortality.

Coleridge showed the same sensitiveness. He felt as if his imagination had suddenly become clothed and mitred with flame. The notes of the nightingale, the hushing of Hartley's crying as the child looked at the moon, the movement of dreams, brilliant gossamer-webs hanging from red and yellow leaves, the sun-shine glimmering greenly through the half-transparent stalks of unripe flax, the amber rays of the evening sun, the sullen lights piercing a stormy sky, the singing of a hidden brook in the sleeping woods—were part of a universal language. The earth was full of meaning.

He was curiously sensitive to the rhythm of Dorothy's voice, and to the words she used. Hitherto he had tended to be ornate in his diction. As he listened to her phrases, he felt like discarding many of his own words as if they were clumsy and outworn. He found himself keeping in his mind her actual words. He would remember the exact phrases she had used when she drew his attention to the curious effect on a moonlight night of the crooked branch of an oak tree, like an arm conjuring the moon, or when she pointed to the last red leaf fluttering on a tree, or remarked on the restless appearance of the surface of the heath when covered with gossamer, or paused to note the greenish-amber hue of a stray slip of light. She spoke to him one morning of the slowness of the spring. Her words were ordinary enough, yet he found himself like a man bewitched closing a verse paragraph with the line:

And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

Dorothy, in her happiness with the poet her brother and the poet her friend, had no desire as they had to interpret for others what was deepest in her life. When they were engaged in composing or writing, she was busy with her household tasks, which seemed to have increased since she had come to Alfoxden, although she was again lucky in having a very nice maid. Coleridge was with them so much that he was almost like a fourth member of the household, and his coming always made a good deal of bustle and stir. Often he brought his friends with him. Day by day there were meals to be prepared, eggs to be fetched,

sticks to be gathered, clothes to be made and mended and washed and ironed, and lessons to be taken with Basil. Dorothy was content that William and Coleridge should feel the breath of creation and let it drive them on their way, while she herself watched for them from the shore. Yet somehow or other, she fell into the way of keeping a record for herself of what she saw and heard from day to day, and some inward compulsion made her keep this record with the most delicate care and truth. The wind in the grass and the wind in the trees had each of them for her a different music, as night after night she listened to the sounds of the earth and sky. She found that once she began to write she was forced to linger over her writing until she had fitted her words exactly to what she heard.

She found too that it gave her a curious pleasure to record the beauty of common things—the gloss of the hollies, the deep yellow of the withered leaves, the bare branches of oaks thickened by the snow, the springing wheat like a green shade over the brown earth, the larches changing suddenly from black to green, the red of holly-berries showing through the snow, the scarlet flowers of the moss, the hawthorn hedges black and pointed, glittering with millions of diamond drops, the soft and vivid green of meadow plots, the glittering of sheep bells in the sunshine, the dewdrops spangling stray locks of wool.

It was not always beauty that moved her most. There were moments when she was moved by something deeper, more bewildering. She could do nothing to express the nature of such moments except to record the external appearances of the things that accompanied them, without adding any comment. One day when looking at a number of sheep in a field she noticed half absentmindedly that only one was standing, and suddenly, as one outside of her own body, she saw the field and the many resting sheep and the one standing, and herself, a woman watching them. And it flashed upon her that this was Life. She was discerning a portion of eternity. The same feeling would come upon her, disturbingly, at odd times, when there was little in what she looked upon through which she could explain and justify her emotion. The rubbing away of moss from the palings by the

sheep, the discolorations on a wooden fence, brittle leaves under the bramble that trailed through the hedges, the dark colour of the fresh-ploughed fields, the thick legs, large heads, and black staring eyes of the young lambs in a green pasture—things negligible at one moment as having in themselves no loveliness, would become in a flash as the footprints of the invisible, blindingly revealed.

Nay, rather—hidden impenetrably in mystery!

3

Coleridge was not satisfied that William and he should busy themselves with expressing the chance feelings and experiences that came to them from day to day. He wished them both to co-ordinate and unify their experiences in long philosophical poems. He meditated a good deal on a long poem, on Man and Nature and Society, in which he meant to express his philosophy. He made many notes for this poem, in moments of illumination, as he wandered on the Quantocks from time to time. His poem was to be called *The Brook*, and the main idea in it was to be the merging of the Finite in the Infinite, even as the small streams are absorbed in the mighty sea. William selected a theme much like Coleridge's. He was to write on Man, on Nature and on Human Life, and his poem was to be called *The Recluse*.

He had also in his mind the beginnings of another poem in which he should express, at greater length than he had yet done, what he felt about the riddle of human life, and its exultations, thwartings and agonies. It was Poole, whose words often seemed to him to have a rude poetry, who had given him the first impulse towards writing this poem. One day Coleridge, Poole and he as they were out on the Quantocks had come upon a gibbet, where a murderer had been executed on the site of his crime, and Poole, who knew every stone upon the hills and found stories in everything, had told them the story of John Walford—well known to him in boyish days—the man who had been hanged there. Walford was a charcoal-burner, who had been thwarted in his love for

a servant girl called Ann Rice, and had been forced into marriage with a woman he loathed. In a moment of passion and disgust he murdered his wife, and was condemned to death for the murder. As he was on his way to the gallows he cried out with a loud voice, looking over the crowd that had come to watch his death: "Is Ann Rice here?" whereupon the girl, who was behind the brow of the hill, was dragged forward almost lifeless to the cart, and knelt in the straw at his feet. He bent down his head over her shoulders and talked to her for nearly ten minutes, but none heard what was said. Raising his head for a moment he then bent down, endeavouring to kiss her lips, but the officer who was standing by interfered, saying: "You had better not. It can be of no use," so that he succeeded only in snatching at her hand and kissing it, the tears for the first time rolling down his cheeks. All this the crowd watched intently. After she was drawn away he regained his calm and wiped his face, saying: "I am now ready," and in a firm unbroken voice addressed the people, saying: "I am guilty of the crime I am going to die for; but I did it without fore-intending it, and I hope God and the world have forgiven me." The crowd was still and amazed, almost afraid to breathe. "The buzz of the multitude was so hushed," said Poole, "that even the twittering of the birds in the neighbouring woods was heard."

Of all the stories that had floated up to them from the life around them, this one affected William most. Coleridge too was much moved by Poole's story of a soul swung perilously between hell and heaven. He felt it had Poetry, a plain man's poetry, but yet Poetry. The gorgeous pall of tragedy showed through the rags of this story of a half-articulate charcoal-burner's frustrated love.

William thought of calling his poem *A Somersetshire Tragedy*.

So absorbed were they all in writing and feeling that the summer came upon them with almost startling suddenness. At the beginning of May Mrs. Coleridge was expecting the birth of her second child. At half-past one on Monday May 14th the child was born, a fine boy, whom his father named Berkeley. Berkeley was such a fine child, and won so much admiration in the first

two days of his life, that Coleridge was half jealous for his darling Hartley.

Two days after the birth, Dorothy, William and Coleridge made an expedition to the Cheddar rocks. They were absent from home for about a week. This was to be the last of their joint excursions, for soon Dorothy and William would have to leave Alfoxden: Mrs. St. Aubin, who did not like what she heard of her tenants, would not be persuaded to renew the year's lease.

Before they left, they entertained Cottle and Hazlitt at Alfoxden. Cottle came from Bristol, driving in a gig; William was along with him. They called at Nether Stowey, where Dorothy was, and then drove on to Alfoxden, leaving Coleridge and Dorothy to walk. They took with them the provisions for the visit, a loaf, a piece of cheese and a bottle of brandy. In the course of their ride they contrived to lose the cheese, and at the end of it the bottle of brandy was broken. Their meal consisted in the end of bread and lettuce, washed down with water. Even salt was missing. Cottle was amused at the bareness of the fare, and at the light-hearted way in which his hosts accepted their losses.

It was Coleridge who brought his admirer, young William Hazlitt, to Alfoxden, where William entertained him by reading to him some of *Peter Bell*. Hazlitt was completely happy during his visit to Nether Stowey. Everything delighted him, the talk of the poets and Miss Wordsworth, the walks on the Quantocks, the lazy hours spent in quaffing flip in Tom Poole's arbour of bark and listening to the humming of the bees.

Towards the end of June Dorothy and William were adrift once more; but Dorothy had good hopes for the future. She had husbanded their resources, and when she reviewed the year's accounts she found that they were not a farthing poorer than when they had begun housekeeping. They had lived always within their income. The year's expenses at Alfoxden, including rent, amounted only to £110.

They left on Monday June 25th. Dorothy was very sorry

to part with the nice country girl, her servant, who for her part vowed she would go to the world's end with her mistress. For a week they stayed with Coleridge. On Monday July 2nd they set out for Bristol, to make arrangements with Cottle for the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Dorothy found the rooms in Mr. Cottle's house in Winc Street intolerably noisy after the sweet sounds and silences of Alfoxden. William and she planned to go into rooms at Shirehampton, a very beautiful village near Bristol, until the autumn, when they hoped to set out, along with Coleridge, for Germany, the costs of the journey being met by the money Cottle was to give them for the poems.

But first of all they wished to have a few days' wandering on the banks of the Wye, of whose beauty William retained the most vivid memories. Crossing the Severn Ferry they walked the ten miles to Tintern Abbey. The next morning they continued their walk through Monmouth to Goodrich Castle. There they spent the night. But something was working in William's brain which would not let him rest, so they returned to Tintern. From Tintern they went on to Chepstow, only to be driven back again by William's need to Tintern, where they slept. The next day they returned to Bristol in a small vessel. Dorothy was very silent, for William was in a fever of creation, labouring to give utterance to harmonies which had lain captive and dormant within him since first he had looked, five years before, upon Tintern Abbey. For the first time in his life he felt as if power had come to him which would enable him to express fully something of the way in which his whole being was at times absorbed into the Presence that dwelt in Nature. Yet the struggle for expression was wrenching him asunder.

The summer evening was becoming overshadowed as they neared the town. But the day's work was done. At last William had finished his poem. In joy and peace of mind they walked the darkening streets of Bristol.



CHAPTER IV: GERMANY

Eagles commonly fly alone: they are Crows, Dawes, and Starlings that flocke together.

“THE DUTCHESS OF MALFY.”

ON August 28th Dorothy and William arrived in London after a pleasant loitering journey, during which they had seen Oxford and visited the presence chamber at Blenheim. They had walked part of the way, occasionally getting a lift in a wagon, so that although they completed their journey by coach and post-chaise their expenses were very slight. They left London on September 14th and arrived at Yarmouth at noon of the following day. William was in the highest spirits. He never enjoyed himself more than when travelling. Dorothy was looking forward eagerly to her first journey abroad.

At eleven o'clock on Sunday the 16th they set sail, along with Coleridge and his friend John Chester. All their travelling companions, fourteen in number, were on deck. There were two Englishmen, two Danes, a French gentleman and his servant, a young Hanoverian, pale and bloated, and his servant, a Swedish nobleman, a German tailor, a Jew, who speedily retired to the hold, a black-eyed mulatto boy, whose round good-natured face, Coleridge said, was exactly the colour of the skin of a walnut kernel, and a tall Prussian merchant of threescore years who entertained the company with jokes which Coleridge found all, without exception, profane and abominable. Coleridge took an instant dislike to this Prussian. Diving beneath the man's geniality, he found the soul as well as the look of a mountebank, who while he is making you laugh, picks your pocket. Among all the droll looks and gestures he found one look untouched by laughter. This look, he said, was the true face. The others were merely the wretch's mask.

The German tailor, himself pathetically tiny, had with him a very tiny, voluble, confused wife.

Coleridge felt melancholy stealing over him as he watched the shore recede. As he lost sight of land he had a vision, lightning-swift, of the faces of Hartley and Berkeley. A sudden unreasoning dread assailed him.

Dorothy had already sought her cabin. Within a little time Coleridge noticed that the other passengers were beginning to look dolciful and frog-coloured. Presently William and Chester disappeared. Coleridge, trying to forget his gloomy thoughts, crept into the boat on deck and soon fell asleep. He was not long undisturbed. The two Danes seeing him dressed in black, with large shoes and black worsted stockings, had promptly christened him "Doctor Teology" and promised themselves some entertainment from his conversation. They sought him out in his retreat and invited him to share their wine and an excellent dessert of grapes and pineapple. In a short time Care was banished. The party of philosophers—one of the Danes had told Coleridge that all in the party were philosophers—talked and sang together and danced on the deck a set of dances, which, Coleridge said when describing them, might in one sense of the word at least be very intelligibly and appropriately described as reels. Coleridge alone felt some remorse of conscience as he thought of the frog-coloured ones in the cabin below.

But the frothing over of the chocolate-pot of a drunken fool's vanity, as he called it, did not amuse Coleridge long. Before the evening was out, the more positive of the Danes, declaiming against the Deity and whispering "what damned *hypochrism* all Jesus Christ's business was," found himself snubbed, and retired to his cabin.

Coleridge, wrapped in his greatcoat, had again the freedom of his thoughts and eyes. He watched the dark waters, marveling at the majesty of the ocean at night, at the beauty of the white clouds of foam, flame-starred, that rushed and roared at intervals along the side of the vessel, now and again detaching themselves and scouring with their galaxies of stars out of sight like a Tartar troop over a wilderness.

The following day he amused himself by watching a solitary wild duck swimming in the objectless desert of waters.

On Tuesday morning they were in still waters at the mouth of the Elbe. Dorothy, coming up from her cabin, was surprised at the expanse of water, like a still sea. At eleven o'clock they were at Cuxhaven. They proceeded up the river in the packet-boat, and thirty-five miles from Cuxhaven, between six and seven o'clock, they cast anchor. Dorothy and William, Coleridge and Chester, had tea upon deck by the light of the moon. A long trembling road of moonlight lay on the waters, reaching to the stern of the vessel. The sound of the jargon of many tongues, heard from the cabin, and yet unable to shatter the impression of solitude and quietness, added to their pleasure. They were all absorbed in their thoughts. William was filled with the joy of wandering; Dorothy shared his delight. Their oneness gave Coleridge almost a pang. He thought of the moon in Somerset, and the evening clouds, and with an impulse of tenderness, of his home. He had a moment's longing for his wife. Suddenly a distinct and vivid image came before his eyes. He could see himself quite clearly coming out of Tom Poole's door, with poor Sara happy in the curve of his arm.

At four o'clock they were awakened by the heaving of the anchor. The morning was cold and wet. The decks were streaming and the shores invisible. There seemed no hope of clear weather, but already by ten o'clock the sun had dispelled the mists and the green shores of the Elbe were revealed. Rich meadows and trees, neat houses, and many steeple-spires, white, black, red, blue, and sometimes green, bordered the river. Many fishing-boats were out, and flocks of gulls were wheeling around them. Coleridge and Dorothy admired Blankenese as they passed it, a village scattered over the sides of three hills. Naked boats with masts lay at the bare feet of the hills.

At Altona it was necessary to take a boat and row through the narrow passages of the Elbe, crowded with the vessels of all nations. They landed at the Boom House, where the porters were

clamoring to receive their luggage. William went to seek a lodging, Coleridge to look around him and visit the English bookseller; Dorothy and Chester amused themselves by watching the busy scene in front of them—the departing boats and their passengers, the people passing in the streets. There was an amusing variety of headgear. Dutchwomen wore bonnets of straw as large as small umbrellas; the Hamburger girls had white caps with broad overhanging borders crimped and stiff, and long lappets of ribbon; the Hanoverians wore round bordered caps that showed all the face; the straw hats of the fruit-women looked like inverted bowls.

The men in the crowd differed little from Englishmen, except that they generally had a pipe in their mouths.

William returned in about an hour, having procured rooms at *Der Wilde Mann*. Coleridge did not care for his quarters. Indeed he grumbled incessantly at Hamburg itself, its noise, its ugliness, its smells, its inns, its shops, its theatre, its knavish merchants with their mean yellow-white faces, which he said would bring disgrace on the complexion of a bad tallow candle. He found it huddle and ugliness, stench and stagnation. He left the town on the Sunday, in a kind of elephantine coach, to cruise for pleasanter quarters.

Dorothy, William and Chester in the meantime amused themselves with excursions to the neighbouring villages. When Coleridge returned on the 27th, William and he went to Klopstock's house, and tried to carry on for a little, in spite of difficulties of language, a conversation with Klopstock on literature. Afterwards they walked on the ramparts, and received an impression of Hamburg that was magical in its beauty. They became aware suddenly as they talked that a sunset of great beauty and singularity was transfiguring to fantasy the world beneath them. A rich sandy light lay over some distant woods that looked dead-black under the blaze of colour; a brassy mist floated over the woods which were immediately under the intensest light. The trees on the ramparts and the people moving to and fro between them

were divided into equal segments of shade and light. The last touch of strangeness was given by the effect of this division of light on a beautiful child, riding on a goat whose saddle and accoutrements were themselves almost fantastically costly and splendid. Looking on this was like looking in one moment at two worlds, or at a world that lay under a spell.

On Sunday September 30th Coleridge and Chester left Hamburg for Ratzeburg at seven in the morning. Dorothy and William left on the evening of the following Wednesday, in a lumbering diligence, to try their fortunes at the romantic imperial town of Goslar. They too were glad to leave Hamburg. The tradespeople, brutally rude and in a conspiracy to cheat foreigners, made life impossible for those whose purses were light.

2

At Goslar William found quarters in the house of Frau Deppermann, a widow, who lived in the Breite-strasse. The rooms were rather desolate and the cost of living was high. Also the town proved inhospitable, and William had little opportunity of speaking German, except with the people of the house. In spite of this isolation and of the extreme cold, Dorothy and he passed the winter pleasantly enough. William felt that Dorothy was the source of their happiness. On one of the coldest days of the century when the stove seemed to both of them accursedly inadequate, he wrote in the midst of some rollicking lines:

. . . I

Can draw warmth from the cheek of my Love;
As blest and as glad in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above.

This was sweet to hear. Dorothy's heart lit up, too, when letters came from Coleridge telling them how much he missed them, even although he had been lucky in Ratzeburg and had been able to make many pleasant acquaintances, very quickly. When he

sent some hexameters to William for criticism, he added wistfully:

You have all in each other; but I am lonely, and want you!

It was exquisite to know that the close sweet bond was unbroken.

William was still bending to the force of the creative breeze which had driven him in Alfoxden. He was still seeking to find words for some of the experience of those days. He was writing the story of Ruth, the broken Somerset wanderer, and pondering the confused pain of Ann Rice and the murderer, her passionate perplexed lover. He thought of these things as he walked alone upon the ramparts, when the cold was too severe for Dorothy, or in a park, where his sole companion was a kingfisher that used to glance by him. And as he walked day by day a new feeling grew within him, a love of the country he had left, at first faint, but afterwards so poignant that it mingled oddly with all that was most dear to him. England's green fields, the fires of her farmhouses, and the spinning-wheel, Mary, Dorothy—all were included in the thought of home and country, and all of them had their share in a series of short poems whose rhythms and music he was gradually beginning to hear within his brain.

He began, too, to try to express in outbursts of verse like that of the *Lines Written A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* some of the experiences of his childhood and boyhood, when meadow, grove and stream had all been touched with wonder and beauty.

In January he went into Upper Saxony, to see if he could find a pleasanter place in which to stay. He reached Nordhausen in his wanderings. With the coming of weather less severe Dorothy and he made expeditions together in the country near Goslar. In February they began to long to go home. On February 23rd, delighted with the fine morning and the sunshine on the fir woods, they left Goslar, determined to try wanderers' luck and explore the country, now walking, now taking advantage of the post-wagons, but sleeping at a different place each night. William was in glorious spirits. Nothing made him feel so exultant as the

feeling which came on him now and again that his life was being shaped and moulded for him by some unseen power to a definite end. During their first morning's walk this feeling was on him so strongly that he broke into a kind of chant about it:

The earth is all before me: with a heart
Joyous, nor scar'd at its own liberty,
I look about, and should the guide I chuse
Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
I cannot miss my way.

As Dorothy listened, and wondered, the glory of his assurance took hold of her too.

On the 27th they were at Nordhausen. The roads were very rough and the wagons very uncomfortable. It was difficult sometimes to secure a shelter at night, for there were innkeepers who did not care to entertain a wandering couple on foot, and who had to be forced into hospitality. Yet they liked exceedingly their rambling adventure. Every now and again they caught a glimpse of pastoral life which delighted them. They pictured to themselves the coming of spring to these plains, the music of the flute and flageolet resounding through the distances, the life like that of flock and shepherd in old time.

Coleridge had gone to Göttingen in the beginning of February. Dorothy and William longed to see him before they left Germany. When they reached Göttingen, towards the end of the third week in April, they found him in great dejection. The news of Berkeley's death, which had reached him a short time before, had plunged him into a sorrow that touched on hysteria. Their visit was very brief. Coleridge seemed to feel less the solace of their coming than a kind of pang at the closeness of their union. As he talked with them, his loneliness became a torment. There was something incalculable, curious and baffling in his mood. It was as if he could hardly bear to see them because he had to let them go.

He accompanied them, when they left, out of the town for five miles, and spent a day with them. They were infected by his sadness, his uncertainty and the obscure trouble that was overwhelm-

ing him. He would make no plans for the future. The nightingales, poor things, were singing in the snow, but even that could not dispel the cloud that hung over them all. The country still had a pinched appearance. Even the new buds were covered with snow. Coleridge kept grumbling at the leafless woods. When at last he turned, Dorothy's heart filled with pain and a shadowy anxiety. William, looking after the rolling hesitant figure, had tears in his eyes.

His one wish was now to get back to England. Dorothy, too, was on fire to be home, and so they proceeded with as little delay as possible, travelling in a diligence to Hamburg. They went down the Elbe in a boat to Cuxhaven, where they embarked. They were well content to be returning, for they were going to spend the rest of the year in the pleasantest place they knew, and the most homelike, the great farmhouse on the banks of the Tees, set in the midst of meadows "as green as Emerald."



CHAPTER V: SOCKBURN

My poor Muse is quite gone—perhaps she may return and meet me at Stowey.

COLERIDGE TO TOM POOLE, MAY 1799.

DOROTHY in returning to Sockburn felt that the time had come when William and she should settle in a home of their own. For five years they had been wanderers, or living in other people's houses. Now they longed for some home, however small, that would be permanent. But where? They had many desires to satisfy. They wished to be near Coleridge; they wished to be near a good library, and they wished to be in the North. Everything they heard—the farm noises, the singing of the birds, the incessant plaintive crying of the lambs, the rough voices of the country people, made them feel that the North was home. Everything they saw, the river and the green fields, the late budding trees, the hills, made them long to settle in their home country. They heard, before the end of May, that the woods in Germany were no longer brown and wintry but clothed in verdure that seemed to have come in a night and that surprised Coleridge "like a sorcery," and that the nightingales whose brave songs had sounded from the snows were now singing divinely amid leafy branches. In the Sockburn fields were no nightingales. But Dorothy was well content with the songs she heard, and would willingly have built where the birds were building.

How could they find a home that would satisfy all their desires? They talked constantly of settling here and there, but there was always something to keep them from making a choice. Poverty made everything difficult for them. Montagu had dealt carelessly with them in money matters, so that they felt more pinched than usual. Also the thought of Annette weighed upon them. The more William liked the sweetness and serenity of the life at Sockburn, and realized the perfection of such a life for him, the more

troubled he was at the thought of Annette, waiting for him until the ending of the war should bring him back to her and their little Caroline.

He was troubled again, too, about his writing. He had lost some of the confidence he had felt at the beginning of the year. Coleridge would have him make some great creative effort, would hear of nothing but *The Recluse*, and insisted that he should write for *The Permanent* and not waste himself on the fugitive pieces which it was his impulse to write ; and yet every day during which he was separated from Coleridge made it more and more difficult for him to continue with *The Recluse*: at times he felt that he needed Coleridge to renew for him the sense of his inspiration. If he could only have five minutes' talk with Coleridge, his work would become alive again.

Coleridge returned to England at the end of June, but for a time that did not make much difference to them, for he went straight to Nether Stowey, and his letters, for which both Dorothy and William longed very much, were for a time infrequent. Yet it was one of his suggestions which started William on a work of some magnitude, not indeed *The Recluse* but something which could be connected with *The Recluse*, and which yet suited his mood and could be carried on independently of the stimulus of Coleridge. This suggestion was that William should write a poem in blank verse, addressed to those who in consequence of the failure of the French Revolution had given up hope of the betterment of mankind, and had sunk into apathy. William seized on this, and as he knew no one who had hoped more than he had himself, or whose disappointment had been more crushing, he thought he would make the poem a record of his own experience and a revelation of the way in which he himself had found his way back to the sources of joy and had been saved from despair. He thought he could work in along with this an account of his poetic development, and include in the poem most of the pieces of confessional verse, chiefly about his boyhood's days, which he had been writing now and again ever since he had made his first confession of

this kind in the *Lines Written A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*. He would address the poem to Coleridge, as there was no one to whom he could speak so freely of his life as Coleridge, and the feeling that he was addressing one who would understand him would give him confidence and help him in achieving the most scrupulous sincerity. The poem, although it would be finished before *The Recluse*, might stand as an Appendix or tail-piece to *The Recluse* when the longer poem was at last completed.

Coleridge was delighted with this idea. In the middle of October William had a letter from him in which he wrote: "I long to see what you have been doing. O let it be the tail-piece of *The Recluse!* for of nothing but *The Recluse* can I hear patiently. That it is to be addressed to me makes me more desirous that it should not be a poem of itself. To be addressed, as a beloved man, by a thinker, at the close of such a poem as *The Recluse* . . . is the only event, I believe, capable of inciting in me an hour's vanity—vanity, nay, it is too good a feeling to be so called; it would indeed be a self-elevation produced *ab extra*."

Far better than any letter was the arrival of Coleridge on the 26th of the month. He had taken Cottle with him as his companion, for he had been in Bristol collecting materials for his work when he had received a letter from William giving him such an impression of longing and unhappiness that he had packed immediately and set out for Sockburn. Cottle had a long-standing invitation to the farm, and William had promised to be his guide through the Lake district if he came North.

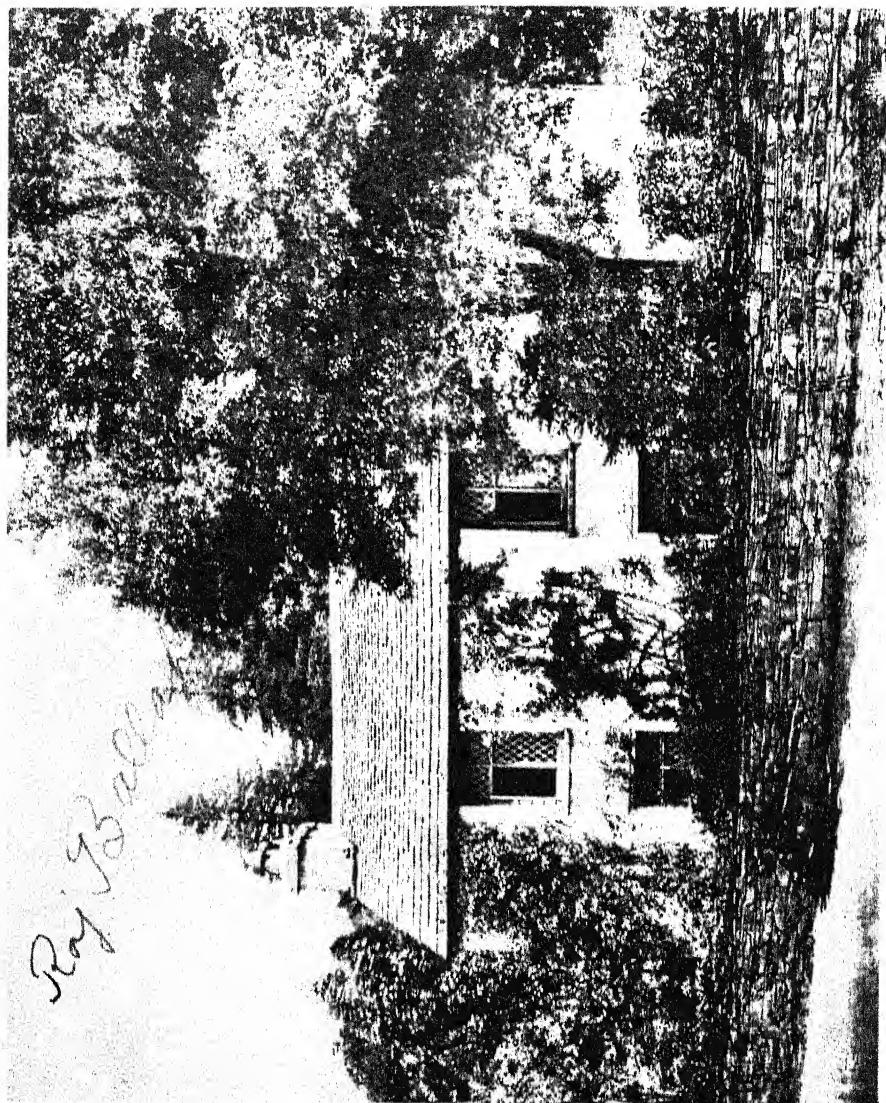
Coleridge felt immediately the charm of the farmhouse and the green fields watered by the Tees. Tom Hutchinson and Sara and young Joanna had been told that Coleridge was a wonderful person, by Mary, who was not much given to emphasis, as well as by William and Dorothy, who were vehement in their enthusiasms. Coleridge felt warmed by their welcome of him. He in his turn liked them well. He liked the unassuming kindliness of Tom and the pleasantness of Mary, welcoming him to her home with the most winning friendliness. Most of all he liked little Sara. His

first meeting with Sara left upon him an impression so exquisitely pleasing that he kept in vain trying to analyse the nature of his pleasure.

Sara was even quieter than Mary. She was as undistinguished in feature as she was tiny in stature, but her fair skin and fine long light-brown silken hair pleased more positively than they would have pleased if they had belonged to a beautiful woman. She had a quiet grace of manner that captivated and a sweet and ready sympathy that made her the perfect companion. She fell easily into the moods of others. She was all softness and harmony.

Coleridge would gladly have spent some time at Sockburn, but William, who was eager to revisit the haunts of his youth before the autumn blaze of beauty had faded, persuaded him to set out on a tour on the last Wednesday of the month; Cottle, who already had had enough of the infinite variety of incident that attended touring with Coleridge, and who had found Wordsworth averse to talking about the *Lyrical Ballads* and sensitive about the failure of the book, started with them but accompanied them only as far as Greta Bridge, about twenty miles from Sockburn. At Temple Sowerby William arranged to meet his brother John. Coleridge liked at once the bronzed and sensitive sailor and was glad that he was joining them. From Temple Sowerby they made their way to Bampton, from Bampton along Hawes Water to Windermere and Hawkshead, where Coleridge saw the unpretentious school in one of whose rough desks the name William Wordsworth was carved, the cottage in which John and William had lived almost as carelessly as birds in their nests, and the windows through which the boys had dropped lightly when they went on their night expeditions. The beauty of the changing scenes of the day, the realization of the perfection and freedom of such a boyhood, the contrast of it all with his own pinched and cabined and over-studious school-days, in which there had been so little beauty, brought on him a mood of melancholy bordering on self-pity.

On the Saturday they went from Hawkshead to Rydal and Grasmere. The day was soft and grave, and when they came to



Roy's Bungalow

Grasmere a purple light lay on the waters, indescribably beautiful. Coleridge spoke of the two lakes as "divine sisters," and admired them sufficiently even to please William, who always in his heart thought of Grasmere as the jewel of the country. They found rooms in the cottage of an old soldier, Robert Newton, and were tempted by the beauty and grace of the little village to linger for a few days. Their cottage bordered the churchyard, and on the Sunday they watched the country people coming to worship. The old church and the churchyard with the river flowing by it had a kind of quietness that went to their hearts. William began to long intensely to make his home beside the lake. John half jokingly offered him £40 to buy the land. They walked by the lake in the afternoon looking for a site on which to build. They had a look, too, at a cottage, formerly an inn, on the coaching road descending from Ambleside into Grasmere. They wondered what Dorothy would think of setting up house in *The Dove* and *Olive Bough*.

John left on the Tuesday. William and Coleridge accompanied him over the fork of Helvellyn, on a day when light and darkness, existing in contiguous masses, made the earth and sky seem to meet. On that day the tarn of Grisedale looked excessively sullen. Even the waters of Ullswater were gloomy.

They said good-bye to John just as they came in sight of Ullswater, and while he went on to Patterdale they swung back to Grasmere. Coleridge was beginning to understand more fully the tyrannous sublimity of whose hauntings William so often had spoken, the imperious brooding influences from sun and sky, water and mountain wind, that could make a man their slave. More strongly than ever he felt the sincerity and intensity of the response made by William to the universe, a response that yet held questionings inevitable, passionate and obstinate.

They did not leave Grasmere until the Friday, when they went on to Wastdale, sleeping that night at the foot of Kirk Fell in Thomas Tyson's house. On the Saturday they reached Cocker-mouth; on the Sunday they were at Keswick. Here again Coleridge was affected by the majesty of the beauty and the beauty

of the majesty he saw. Derwentwater shining in the twilight, black crags under mountains whose snowy crests were coloured with the light of setting suns, the rich mulberry-purple of floating clouds, the troops of stars that visited stately Skiddaw—all these made him feel the despair of a poet confronted by loveliness that is inexpressible. He longed for Dorothy, to share the burden of rapture and despair.


As November advanced, and the dull days came in succession and the vapours came rolling down the valleys, the fatigues and exposures of wandering began to tell on him, and he longed to return to Sockburn. William had not yet had his fill of autumn rambling. And so they parted, on a day of silver clouds and sunshine on the grass. William lay for some time under a grove of oaks, enjoying the silence so deep that the falling of an acorn sounded like thunder in his ears, and dreaming, until at length he retraced his steps to Grasmere. Coleridge, returning to Sockburn, felt the delight of the welcome given him, and the warmth of an interest that at once soothed and stimulated him.

Some of the impressions, exquisitely pleasing, which he had received at his first visit, were beginning to form themselves into words. The Grey-Stone in a field near the farmhouse, the statue of an armed knight in the church, the gentle grace of Sara as she stood pensive beside the statue—all these had found a place in his imagination and were becoming part of a poem he was meditating.

A sense of quickened life surged through him. It was divine to recapture the mood in which all the details of life became luminous and beautiful, divine to be able to transfigure and create, divine to experience a rebirth of feeling.

Coleridge had found his muse again, but not at Nether Stowey.

BOOK III
GRASMERE



CHAPTER I

I think I am as well in this Valley as I have been anywhere else in all our journey; the place, methinks, suits with my spirit.

“THE PILGRIM’S PROGRESS.”

WHEN William returned to Sockburn he found Coleridge gone. Dorothy too was away, and this was a great disappointment to him, for he had the best of news for her. He had chosen a cottage in their beloved Grasmere. Mary, who was alone at Sockburn, was overjoyed to see him, and happy to hear of his successful quest.

Shortly after Dorothy’s return, they began their preparations for departure. On December 17th they left Sockburn, early in the morning, and crossed the Tees in the Sockburn fields by moonlight. William was mounted upon the beautiful white pony called Lilly by everybody except Cottle, who had always called her Violet. Dorothy, who, although she had no fear, had never quite learned to manage a horse, was behind George Hutchinson. After ten good miles’ riding they came within sight of the Swale. Four miles further on they saw the huge ivied mass of Richmond Castle, its friarage steeple and its tower etched against the lights that were cutting the sky. In Wensleydale they said good-bye to George. They were sorrowful, for the parting meant an end of the Sockburn days. The Hutchinsons were about to go to a new farm in Yorkshire.

As the morning wore on, Dorothy recovered her spirits in the sharp keen air. That day William and she walked as far as Ask-rigg, which they reached just before six in the evening. The next morning they set off early again, feeling a stinging pleasure in the driving snow showers which gradually cleared the sky until the East was unveiled, of a delicate orange colour. They watched the pale yellow lights of the morning reflected in a stream which ran

among gloomy rocks. The knowledge that they had twenty-one miles to walk in that short winter's day was a challenge to them, and the long vales which they traversed, through bursts of sunshine and through flying showers, were rapidly left behind. At Hardraw, after warming themselves by a cottage fire, they went out of their way to see a waterfall, the whiteness of whose masses of ice, which Dorothy said were like congealed froth, made a picturesque contrast with the deep black of the rock in the centre of the falls, and with the adjoining parts, which were yellow, dove-coloured, and purple. The water-plants of the most vivid green, which covered the rocks, added an Arabian touch of enchantment to the strange frozen beauty.

The wind seemed to enter into their mood and drove them over the ten miles of high mountain road in two hours and a quarter. Then William, who was full of quips and fancies that day, said that they were like two ships at sea, flying before the breeze. When the wind coming round a corner buffeted them and drove them apart for a moment, he said they were like two birds, companions in mid-air, parted and reunited by the blast. He had recaptured the mood of assurance and faith in which he was at his happiest, in which all he met seemed to speak to him and direct him and question him. The naked trees and the icy brooks seemed to him to say: "Whence come ye? To what end?"

They walked the last seven miles to Sedbergh in ninety-five minutes.

The next morning they walked the eleven miles from Sedbergh to Kendal, where they spent the day in buying their first furniture. On the 20th they took a post-chaise to Grasmere. They were both affected by the beauty of the day. A feathery coating of snow lay like grace upon the earth. The sunbeams playing upon them through the windows seemed to tell them to be happy in their new life. By the time they entered the vale of Grasmere, at about half-past four, the evening sky was bright and solemn. They felt as if the heavens were leading them to their threshold with a passionate

It was just five o'clock when the chaise stopped before Dove Cottage. An old woman, with deep kind wrinkles in her face, appeared at the door and led them into a stone-flagged room where a handful of reddish cinders lay forlornly in the dark chimney. For a fortnight she had been keeping fires in the house, trying with two bushels of coal to make it comfortable and dry. As she looked at the tall quiet master of the house, and at the pleased eager movements of "Mistress" in her little straw bonnet and striped gown, there was no prouder woman in Grasmere than old Molly Fisher.



CHAPTER II

. . . they are the gods, that must ride on winged horses, . . .

“THE DUTCHESS OF MALFY.”

DOROTHY, as she went from room to room that first night, thought the cottage, small as it was, quite large enough for comfort. Downstairs were the kitchen and two stone-floored rooms; above there were three fair-sized rooms, one of which would make a pleasant sitting-room. It was too dark to see much outside, but the next morning, standing in the orchard at the back of the cottage, she looked round her with delight at what she saw, for the home of her dreams had never been half as beautiful. The cottage, which was only a few feet off the road, stood above the lake. Behind it were the towering masses of Nab Scar. The orchard itself was but a slip of the mountain, enclosed and cultivated. It sloped upwards from the house so that from the top of it they could look right over the roof and see the lake. They had a view of the church and Helm Crag and more than two-thirds of the vale. Dorothy instantly built in her imagination a seat and a summer hut in this lofty and gracious place. She clothed the front of the cottage with honeysuckle and roses.

The first few days were not very comfortable. The weather was keen' and frosty, and, although Molly Fisher had done her best to warm the house, Dorothy working in the almost empty curtainless rooms caught a troublesome cold, which was followed by severe toothache. William, who also had a bad cold, pitied her as she sat racked with pain, plying her needle among the heaped-up material for the bed-curtains and household odds and ends. Presently the clear frosty weather lured him out of doors, to find to his delight that Rydal was covered with ice, clear as polished steel. He procured a pair of skates and on Christmas Day enjoyed himself on the ice. He tried to tempt Dorothy outside but without

much success, except one evening when they both watched the planet Jupiter shining above the highest of the Rydal mountains.

Dorothy found that much had to be done before the cottage would be comfortable. One of the rooms upstairs smoked like a furnace; some of the doors had to be mended; most of the rooms needed painting and papering; there was endless sewing to be done. William was not of much use in doing oddments of work indoors; but before the end of the year John arrived, and Dorothy found that a sailor's clever hands could help her in numberless ways. Mary Hutchinson came for five weeks in the beginning of the year and gave much help. Molly Fisher, made happy by a wage of two shillings a week, was a proud and eager assistant. To please "Mistress" she learned quickly to keep her kitchen spotless and her coppers so bright that they looked like shining ornaments.

Soon the cottage was made neat and comfortable within-doors. To Dorothy it seemed to have only two serious disadvantages. It was very near the road, and it was so built that sounds passed very distinctly from one part of the house to another.

The first two months were very stormy. Dorothy did not make long expeditions among the hills during this stormy weather, but day after day she found time for walking about Grasmere. One of her favourite walks was round the lake. William and she became much interested in a pair of lovely milk-white swans whose safe retreat during the unrelenting storms was at the centre of the lake. The solitary pair who had thus taken up their dwelling-place at Grasmere seemed to William somehow linked and connected with the choice made by Dorothy and himself, almost symbolic of it. He was much grieved when one day the swans were to be seen no more in their small open space of blue unfrozen water. Dorothy and he hoped that no inhospitable hurt had come from the dalesmen to the devoted, beautiful, inseparable creatures who had trusted their innocent lives to the hospitality of the vale and whose snowy beauty had been the last exquisite touch of grace.

In April Coleridge came to stay with them. His visit was

somewhat clouded both by work and by worry about money. He had tired of the political hackwork he had been doing in London and of the translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* which he was just completing, and he was greatly troubled because of a financial indiscretion of which he had been guilty and which had annoyed Josiah Wedgwood. Cottle, in money difficulties, and somewhat wounded by the very mean opinion of his epic poem which Coleridge had frankly expressed, had begun to press for the payment of an old debt of £20. Coleridge, who had not the money but who expected in a short time to receive a larger sum than this from his bookseller, had given him a draft on Wedgwood, not to be presented until three weeks had passed. He had meant to write to Wedgwood to explain what he had done, and to forward the money before the draft became due, but Cottle had presented the draft before the expiration of the three weeks and before any explanation had been made. Wedgwood had written to ask for an explanation.

All one Sunday Coleridge sat brooding and humiliated, trying to write to Wedgwood and wretchedly conscious that his procrastination had taken the grace out of anything he could say. He was drooping and miserable, complaining that his wings were never unbirdlim'd. The freedom of the life in the cottage, where William worked or idled as he pleased, where all were free to walk or row, to fish in the tarns at the tops of the mountains or to linger in the woods as the mood took them, made the bookish drudgery in which he had spent the past six months seem no life at all to him, but a restless vexing suspension of life.

He left Grasmere on May 4th. Ten days later William and John started on a tour into Yorkshire, intending to see Gordale and Yordas and to spend about three weeks with Tom and Mary Hutchinson at their new farm of Gallow Hill. Dorothy accompanied them to the turning of the Low Wood bay. Her heart was very full when she said good-bye to them. It was such a short time since Mary had been with them, and already William could not be at peace until he had seen her again. For a long time Dorothy sat upon a stone by the margin of the lake, feeling singularly

desolate; the beauty seemed to have gone out of things, or to have in it something troubling; the lake looked dull and melancholy, and the weltering of the waters on the shores made a heavy sound. She found herself weeping from some uncontrollable agitation, some nameless dread, which she did not wish to name, some shadowy fear to which she sought to deny form.

While William and John were away she was constantly out of doors. Swift walking was her chief pleasure. One Sunday evening as she was going to Ambleside by Loughrigg Fell, she was amused when two Cumberland people overtook her, and stopped to compliment her on her speed. On these walks, she watched the country with a gardener's eye, for she was busy making a garden at the cottage. The space between the cottage and the road had been enclosed, and the fence which had formerly been between the cottage and the orchard had been removed. Honeysuckle and climbing roses had been planted by the cottage windows. Dorothy found that almost every day she could find some treasure for the garden she was shaping—mosses from Easedale, wild thyme and wild columbine from the hill above the cottage, orchises from the lakeside, foxgloves and primroses from the Bainriggs wood. In these walks she got to know many of the folk upon the roads and fells—the blind man whom she first met beyond Clappersgate leaning on two crutches but driving splendidly before him a very large beautiful bull and a cow; the patient bow-backed carrier always upon his rounds; meagre uncomplaining children with hungry bellies, turned out of their homes to beg their food; old men with a stoop, carrying heavy burdens; women seeking work from town to town; pedlars doing their accustomed rounds; the cripple riding on an ass; the paralytic man on his small grey horse; wild-looking bronzed tinkers with merry ragged children running like little animals in the wind or hanging playfully over the edges of much-patched panniers slung on tiny asses.

She was getting to know well also the cottagers near her. John Fisher, Molly's brother, one of the oldest inhabitants of the valley, would tell, as he sodded the garden wall, of the changes more than

half a century had brought. All the Fisher family were good company. Old Aggy Fisher, who kept house for John, was a slatternly housekeeper, but even when her own cottage was covered with layers of dust, she would find time to do a kind turn for a neighbour. She was of a meditative turn of mind. One lovely morning, when the sense of life was everywhere, she surprised William, as she walked along the road with him, by discoursing on the advantages and even the sweetness of an early death. Dorothy was often interested and amused by her odd turns of thought.

So close to Dove Cottage that the noises of the one house might be heard in the other was the cottage of the Ashburners. Thomas had once been a "statesman" and the loss of his land had been the great grief of his life; Peggy suffered much from asthma, and sometimes coughed as if she would cough herself to death during the long winter evenings. Other neighbours were Jenny Dockeray, from whose garden had come the white and yellow lilies and periwinkle at the sides of the orchard, and old Matthew Newton, blinded at the White Moss Quarry many years before, now always among his flowers or moving about the roads slowly, led by his sister or his patient dog. From the blind man's garden had come the London Pride which Dorothy planted on her wall and in her borders.

Dorothy's chief friend among all her neighbours of the poorer sort was her servant Molly Fisher. There was often some kind of wisdom or some touch of pity in Molly's words which preserved them in the memory; there was always a touch of quaintness. She showed constantly a thankfulness for having work to do and a roof over her head that had in it something at once proud and wistful.

One evening Dorothy saw Molly looking at her earnestly.

"What is it, Molly?" said she.

"Aye, Mistress," Molly sighed deeply. "Them 'at's low laid would have been proud creatures could they but have seen me where I is now, fra what they thought mud be my doom."

Dorothy was much moved.

2

The first week of June Dorothy was expecting the return of William. On the Wednesday evening she was watering the plants in the garden when she heard footsteps approaching the cottage. She knew even before she straightened herself to listen that this was not William's tread. She was pleased, though, when old Mr. Sympson, the clergyman of Wythburn, appeared, and his daughter Eliza, the constant companion of his walks. Dorothy much liked the brave strong old man, spirited to a fault, who, although over eighty years of age, still made expeditions among the hills, and she found Miss Sympson, in spite of her quietness and reserve, an interesting woman. When they started for home, she accompanied them along the beautiful way towards their home—a roadside cottage which gentle old Mrs. Sympson had made bright and delicate inside—and they all went to see the waterfall at the head of the valley, very beautiful in the twilight. As she returned, carrying a number of plants for the garden, she thought of Miss Sympson, who was just a few years older than herself, and whose life in many ways was like her own, but quieter, more settled into peaceful ways. When she reached home she went out at once to plant her lemon-thyme and the other roots.

The next day she gathered plants on the hillside and spent the rest of the time in the garden, now working, now lying under the trees where the little busy birds were making love and pecking at the blossoms and moss. She did not wish to go far from home, as William might return at any moment. In the evening the Sympsons called again and they went to the blind man's cottage to get London Pride, as Miss Sympson wanted some for her garden. The evening was again moonlit, and Dorothy accompanied them part of the way home.

On the Friday she wrote letters in the morning, sat out of doors reading all the afternoon, and in the evening, still half reluctant to leave the house, she went to Ambleside to post a letter to Coleridge. The evening was very lovely. As Dorothy drew near home she slackened her pace, for her heart beat fast with the fear that William might not yet have come. The cottage was empty when

she reached it. That night she lay awake till after one o'clock, listening to every barking dog.

On the Saturday she went in the morning to the Symptons to gather gooseberries. In the afternoon she gathered plants on the hillside and by the lake, watered the garden, and weeded. It was not till eleven o'clock that night that she heard a footstep at the front of the house and the sound of the gate opening. This was William, come at last. After their first joy was over, Dorothy made some tea. They talked till four o'clock on the Sunday morning, and then went out in the greyness of earth and sky to see all the improvements in the garden. Everything looked fresh, though not gay. The birds were already singing.

John returned that evening.

On the Monday morning William cut down the winter cherry tree. Dorothy sowed French beans and broccoli, stuck the peas and watered the garden. In the afternoon they went on the lake to fish, but caught nothing.

The remainder of the month passed quietly, in walking and gardening. Dorothy sowed kidney beans and spinach, and constantly added to the plants in her borders. Sometimes they all went fishing. Mr. Sympton liked to accompany them, even when they went to the tarns at the tops of the mountains. One very hot Thursday morning William and he went fishing in Wythburn water, and William came home with a pike weighing four and three-quarter pounds.

They were expecting daily the arrival of the Coleridges, who were going to settle at Greta Hall, Keswick, and the sense of expectancy kept William restless and disinclined to begin any serious work. On the last Sunday of the month the Coleridges came. The day was very warm and they all went on the lake and sailed to the foot of Loughrigg. Hartley, sensitive to every impression, was delighted with all he saw. Dorothy found him a most amusing companion. They had many such expeditions, although Coleridge was in poor health, often listless, and some days unable to stir out of bed. The weather was delightful. One Sunday they made a fire in Bainriggs wood and had tea under the trees. Often they

rowed over to Grasmere island. The evening before the Coleridges left they all went to the island to have tea. Hartley danced about collecting fir cones and wood for a fire, above which they swung their kettle from the branch of a fir tree. Coleridge lay lazily watching the woods and mountains and lake idealized through the smoke. Afterwards he made along with Hartley a glorious bonfire on the margin of the lake, near some elder bushes, whose twigs heaved and sobbed in the uprushing column of smoke, and they all watched the reflection of the fire in the peaceful lake. Hartley was, as his father said, like a spirit dancing on an aspen leaf. His joy was a wonder to see.

The Coleridges left on July 24th. William, whom Coleridge had twitted with being a lazy fellow, then got to work in earnest. Day by day he composed during his walks and pondered the principles of poetry. Coleridge came over from Keswick constantly. On the afternoon of the last day of July he appeared. The three men went out to bathe, and afterwards with Dorothy they sailed to Loughrigg, reading poetry and letting the boat take its own course. The next day William and Coleridge sat in the shade most of the time talking about poetry. When Coleridge returned to Keswick on the Saturday, William accompanied him. The house seemed quiet to Dorothy and John after their departure; somehow when Coleridge was in the house there was no quiet but always the feeling of intensest life. John went out fishing for the day and Dorothy did oddments of work. She papered William's room, tied up the scarlet beans which she was training with threads upon the wall, nailed the honeysuckles and roses which had been somewhat beaten by the rain, gathered the first basket of peas for the Sunday's dinner, and sent baskets of peas to Keswick and to old Mrs. Sympson.

William returned from Keswick on the Wednesday, was busy composing in the woods on Thursday, and nothing would suffice but that he should return to Keswick the following day. Dorothy went with him, walking over the mountains by Watendlath. They reached Keswick at eleven o'clock at night, after an enchanting walk.

William was now no longer his own master, but the slave of the poetry he was composing. His walks had no power to rest his mind, but tormented him rather with the constant vision of the inexpressible, which it was his task to express. His blood beat fast; his sleep was broken.

He began to prepare a new edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, with a Preface to explain the principles of his poetry. The poems, the first fruits of the Grasmere life, which he was composing from day to day, were to be included in this edition. It was Dorothy's chief work to help him, to try to rest his mind when she could, and to spare him all possible physical labour connected with the poems, most of which were transcribed by her, although Coleridge gave a good deal of help. Thrice a week they endeavoured to send away manuscript. The work was wearing, for William was haunted by nervous afterthoughts. Sometimes after the poems had been sent to Ambleside the desire to make some alteration would tease him, so that Dorothy and he would walk to Ambleside after dark and knock at the post-office door to recover the sheets. They would sit at Mrs. Nicholson's kitchen fire talking in low voices over the wording, until the manuscript was to William's liking. Then Dorothy would knock at the bedroom door to let Mrs. Nicholson know they were going, adding ruefully and apologetically: "We'll not trouble you any more this night."

She found that the work she did in connexion with the poems and the Preface, added to her share of the housework, which included sewing and mending, ironing and baking, made her days very busy. She got into the way of lingering by herself, late at night, sometimes to write, sometimes to meditate. Coleridge, arriving at eleven o'clock at night on the last day of August, after walking over Helvellyn, found her in the still clear moonlight in the garden, after the others had gone to bed, watching the vale bathed in the silvery light.

In such ways she fed her soul. All the year, as never before, she had sought beauty. And beauty was all around her for the taking. She had only to walk upon the steepes of Loughrigg in the morning,

to look upon the lake solemn in the twilight, with the rushes waving shadowy upon its surface like grasses upon a plain, to go to the top of the orchard and watch the moonlight resting on the hills like snow—to feel her spirit dissolved in what she saw, and her heart, in moments of unrest, called home to quietness.

Yet there were days when this refuge failed her, when beauty brought no deliverance but rather an added disturbance of spirit, when the valley all perfumed with the gale and the wild thyme assailed her senses with restless torment, when the winds of summer blew parched and stifling as from the beach of an inflamed sea. At these times she longed most of all for peace.

One shining September day she was mastered by this longing. In the morning she had accompanied William, John and Coleridge, who were going out for the day with Mr. Sympson, part of the way to Helvellyn. Afterwards she went to John Dawson's cottage to the funeral of a poor woman, childless and without kin, whose life had been poverty-stricken and hard and who was being buried by the parish. As the men standing by the threshold sang a verse of a funeral psalm while the coffin was set down at the door, she was much affected. The men descended the hill slowly, bearing on their shoulders the black-painted coffin in the golden sunshine, and still singing until they had passed the Town End on their way to the churchyard. The valley looked divinely beautiful; the green fields beside the churchyard were gay in the mellow light. Dorothy thought suddenly that the woman was at least going to a quiet place.

She found herself weeping very much.



CHAPTER III

This is a Valley that nobody walks in but those that love a pilgrim's life. . . .

I must tell you, that in former times men have met with angels here, . . .

“THE PILGRIM’S PROGRESS.”

WILLIAM worked steadily for the rest of the year, except when interrupted by the comings and goings of friends. His old friend Jones spent a week with him in September. The cottage was at its best then, with the scarlet beans and the honeysuckle and roses decorating the walls; the pear trees in the orchard were already a bright yellow contrasting with apple trees which were still green.

Visitors who came frequently were Coleridge’s old friend Charles Lloyd and his wife Sophia, who had a house at Ambleside. The intimacy with the Lloyds was awkward in some ways, for Coleridge, who had quarrelled with Charles, still refused to meet him. But Priscilla Lloyd had become engaged in the course of the summer to Christopher, and this made it natural that they should see something of her brother. Otherwise William might have seen less of them, for although he found Sophia Lloyd a pleasant woman, he was not particularly in sympathy with Charles, who was very highly strung and difficult.

Among the other acquaintances they had made in the neighbourhood were Captain and Mrs. Tuff, who also lived at Ambleside, Mr. Olliff, in whose woods near Greenhead Ghyll Dorothy spent many pleasant hours, and Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson of Eusemere. Dorothy much liked Mr. Clarkson, for she found in him a man full of loving-kindness towards both man and beast. She was fully in sympathy with his work for the slaves, and she could understand the passion of fiery pity that consumed him and drove him hither and thither in his labours, giving him no rest. She found Mrs. Clarkson, who was just about her own age, not only very kind and hospitable, but a very charming woman indeed, and a very amusing and eloquent talker. She loved to



GRISEDALE TARN

listen to Mrs. Clarkson's stories of a girlhood spent at Bury, and of the friends and companions of those days.

The most picturesque person in their group was Mr. Julius Caesar Ibbetson, the landscape painter, who sometimes rode over from Brathay or Troutbeck with his spirited son, a lad of fifteen or sixteen years. Mr. Ibbetson, boisterous and pleasure-loving, carefree and impecunious, was a generous patron of all the inns of the district. The King's Head at Legberthwaite, The Nag's Head at Wythburn, The Hunted Man at Troutbeck and its jolly mistress, Sally Birkett, all knew him well. He was a man generally beloved, although reckoned by the precise a little wild. Indeed it was impossible not to like him. Dorothy and William, when they walked round Brathay and Ambleside, would sometimes look in on him and have tea with him.

In the middle of September Coleridge's third son was born. His father, who hated commonplace names, called the child Derwent.

At the end of September John had to join the ship to which he had been appointed, the East Indiaman *Abergavenny*. He had grown to love Grasmere, the hills and tarns, the cottage and the many walks about it. A grove above the cottage was so trodden by his feet that Dorothy and William called it John's Grove. When he left, they walked with him over the hills until they came to the turning-place, by Grisedale Tarn, in sight of Helvellyn. The day was showery, but with sunshine and fine clouds. John promised gaily to make their fortunes so that they could live as they pleased, always, without care. In spite of his brave words, Dorothy was sad at heart at the parting.

William began in October a poem on a ruined sheepfold he had seen in Greenhead Ghyll. This fold, built in the form of a heart, unequally divided, had caught strongly at his imagination, yet he found it difficult to put into words what he felt about it and the life it symbolized, so that the poem was not finished until December. He was glad it was in time for his volume.

After the last of the manuscript had been sent away, Dorothy

had for a time more leisure, and William, tired out by continuous composition, was in no haste to begin any new work. The *Lyrical Ballads*, although due to appear before the end of the year, were not ready until the beginning of January. After their appearance there followed days that seemed very quiet. William longed now and again to hear what impression the poems were making, especially *Michael*, as the poem on the sheepfold was called, and *The Brothers*, in which he felt that he had succeeded in his double purpose of showing the life and the ways of the dalesfolk and of illustrating what is universal in human nature. Coleridge gave him constant sympathy and interest. But for the most part comment from the world was slow in coming. William sent a copy of the poems to Fox, but they wearied of waiting for a reply. Sometimes the comments, even of friends, were disappointing. Charles Lamb wrote to say that of all the poems he liked the Lucy verses best, and to send a kiss to pretty Barbara Lewthwaite. William found the letter disconcerting and did not hesitate to say so. Coleridge too was a little vexed.

For a time, in the early spring, during one of Coleridge's illnesses, Hartley spent some time at Dove Cottage. The dreamy child, full of chatter about his baby brother and his darling Wilsy (as he called Mrs. Wilson, his landlord's housekeeper) and his own quaint fancies, was a dear companion to Dorothy. In some ways he was very strange. He was long in falling asleep at night, and if left without a candle would make himself miserable with "the seems" which he said would come and fill his room, men and faces sometimes pretty and sometimes ugly, which he could see when his eyes were open and still more clearly when his eyes were shut. He could not send them away. Only a candle, he said, could cure "the seems."

Dorothy now went a great deal among the cottagers near her. She felt very much for the poor in their difficulties. Old John Fisher would sometimes lament the way in which conditions were changing so that the land was passing from the people of the dales, to whom originally it belonged. He thought that soon there would be only two ranks of people, the very rich and the very poor.

"Those who have small estates," he said to Dorothy one day, "are forced to sell, and all the land goes into one hand." Dorothy had often heard of this grievance, for Peggy Ashburner would many times tell her how they had all worked to make up the taxes and interest. The family had got up at five o'clock in the morning to spin and Thomas to card, yet all their industry had been of no avail, and Thomas's few fields had passed into the hands of a stranger. Peggy would speak with especial wistfulness of the pleasure she had taken in the cattle and sheep. "Oh," said she one day, "how pleased I used to be when they fetched them down, and when I had been a bit poorly I would gang out upon a hill and look ovr't fields and see them, and it used to do me so much good you cannot think."

Thomas now made a living by carting and doing odd jobs.

His land had been his heart's heart.

Dorothy was peculiarly touched by the way the people about her, even the poorest of them, clung to home and the idea of home. In January William and she were much concerned for two of their neighbours, John and Mary Hodgson, both of them over eighty years of age. The old man was bedridden. His wife attended him, and managed the cottage with the aid of some of her neighbours, who helped her with wood and with fetching water from the well and doing some of the heavier parts of her work. But during the snows that followed the Christmas season she was seized with a lameness which often made it impossible for her to attend to her husband and carry the food to his bed. This was terrible to them both, for they feared that after having kept house together for sixty years they would be separated and boarded out among some other poor of the parish.

The old woman told Molly Fisher that if this happened "it would burst her heart."

It was difficult to know what to do for such sufferers.

Coleridge too felt very keenly the poverty around him. He found it difficult enough to provide bread and meat for his own table, yet hourly some starving wanderer came to beg for food at his door. He began to long to leave a country in which he had

constantly to look on sufferings which he could not relieve. The laborious poor—he said—were dying with grass in their bellies.

His thoughts turned first of all to America, where he thought of settling near Priestley. Then he fixed his fancy on going along with William and Dorothy to St. Michael's in the Azores. His third plan was the most sanguine of all. It was to settle with his family, with Robert and Edith Southey and with William and Dorothy, at St. Nevis in the West Indies, in which John Pinney had an estate, and make the island more illustrious than Cos or Lesbos. "By the living God," he wrote, "it is my opinion that we should not leave three such men behind us." John Pinney would perhaps find posts as sinecure negro-drivers for them. Or perhaps they might get some office in which there was nothing to do, under the government.

Coleridge was all the more eager to go abroad because he was convinced that the climate of the North did not suit him. Ever since coming to Keswick he had been plagued by one physical misery after another. The winter rains had brought on a bout of rheumatic fever which had been followed by a tedious and distressing hydrocele followed in its turn by a malady to which a vexed physician gave the name of "irregular gout with nephritic symptoms." These illnesses were accompanied by outward signs of unhealth, depressing in the extreme—bloodshot eyes, boils on the neck and shoulder, swelling of the limbs, and a knottiness in the joints left by the nightly visitations of the Lady Arthritis. Even more serious were the mental consequences of suffering—an agitation of spirit amounting to feverishness, a nervousness amounting to hysteria, usually followed by drooping moods of melancholy and self-loathing.

At times he lost hope and his constant cry was: "Sinking, sinking, sinking, I feel that I am sinking." William and Dorothy were profoundly affected by his fluctuations of health and spirits. They had only one comfort. Mysterious as the illnesses were, and distressing in a young man of twenty-eight, Coleridge had a power of recovery that seemed to indicate an uncommon strength of constitution. He rose from his bed like a man from the grave, endowed with some miracle of renewed life.

At the beginning of May he was very ill both in mind and body. Towards the end of the month he was better. In June he was at Grasmere. One day when walking with Dorothy he bent to pick up something from the ground. When he raised his head he looked dazed and said: "I am sure, Rotha, that I am going to be ill." Dorothy feared that he was giddy, but presently he told her the reason of his fear. As he had bent his head there had come a vivid spectrum before his eyes, distinct and lovely as in his fever dreams. He described most beautifully what he had seen—a rock, with waving birches and delicate ferns on it, in front a cottage and a running stream.

His fear was justified. A sudden change of weather had brought about the beginning of another illness.

Dorothy could never get over a feeling of wonder at Coleridge's attitude to these experiences, at his way of isolating his sufferings and making them the basis of speculation. In her wonder there was a touch of fear, for she was not sure that this habit did not itself deepen and intensify the evil. In his long wakeful nights Coleridge pondered the relations of thoughts to things. In the extremity of pain he catalogued his sensations as the material from which to raise his work on the metaphysics of pain. Most of his interest was now in metaphysics. "The poet in me is dead," he would frequently declare. It was always with regret that Dorothy heard him speak like this. At times he himself regretted the change, and would lament, in words piercingly sweet, the passing of transport. At other times he seemed satisfied with his speculation. The habit of detached observation and the pleasure he felt in chasing down metaphysical game grew on him, affecting him in all his relationships. One day Hartley, looking out of the study windows, was unusually still. Fixing his eyes steadily on the mountains opposite he asked his father at last: "Will yon mountains *always* be?" Coleridge showed him the prospect in a looking-glass which he held so that the whole scene was like a canopy overhead, and watched the child struggling with almost convulsive effort to express himself regarding the difference between the thing and the image. That night he wrote: "I never before saw such an abstract

of *thinking* as a pure act and energy—of thinking as distinguished from thought.”

He was much interested, too, in Chemistry. He wrote to Humphry Davy asking for “Directions for a convenient little laboratory” and, unsettled as he was, he tried to persuade William Calvert to build a laboratory on Windy Brow. He experimented constantly, although the laboratory was never built. Some of the experiments seemed ludicrous enough to Dorothy. He came over to them one evening with his hands scarred with a thousand scratches, explaining that the honourable scars had been gained in rubbing the back of a cat in the dark to see whether the sparks from it were refrangible by a prism. Chemistry and metaphysics were constantly mingled in his talk. He wrote, when bemoaning the postponement of Humphry Davy’s visit in the summer: “The summer after, my ghost perhaps may be a gas.”

In July he went to stay with George and Sara Hutchinson at Bishop’s Middleham, Rushford, near Durham, to procure the works of Duns Scotus from the Dean and Chapter’s library. The visit was in some ways disappointing. He disliked going into Durham to read, and blamed the librarian for making difficulties about sending out books to George Hutchinson’s farm. He pronounced the librarian a stupid haughty fool, and the priests belonging to the cathedral thoroughly ignorant and hard-hearted. He said that when he asked the librarian for the works of Leibnitz he received the reply: “We have no Museum in this Library for natural curiosities; but there is a Mathematical Instrument setter in the town who shows such animalcula through a glass of great magnifying powers.”

His return to Keswick was followed by an illness during which his left knee swelled to the size of the thickest part of the thigh. Dr. Fenwick recommended horse-exercise and sea-bathing, and he rode with Sara Hutchinson to Gallow Hill, which was near Scarborough. From Scarborough he was recalled to Keswick by the news, which reached him in August, that Southey was about to start for Keswick with his family.

During August Southey and he explored the country together—Dorothy and William were often of the party. In September Dorothy was left alone, for William went to Scotland at the beginning of the month, to attend the marriage of Basil Montagu to Miss Laura Beaumaris Rush. His letters, hurriedly written though most of them were, on the ledges of inn windows or while waiting for the coach, made Dorothy long to see the autumn splendour of Scotland.

Southey was still in the North when William returned. In October Tom Hutchinson spent some time at Dove Cottage, and Mary came towards the end of the month. Early in the autumn there came a cold snap. Skiddaw and Grisedale Pike had their first white coating on October 20th. Later the weather was again tempting for expeditions. On Saturday the 24th Dorothy set out with William and Tom to climb Fairfield, but the day, which was mild and soft, was too misty for climbing and they got no further than the heart-shaped sheepfold in Greenhead Ghyll. On the Sunday, after a lunch of bread and cheese at the Wythburn Inn at twelve o'clock, they went up Helvellyn. The heavy autumn mists, which the sun had not yet dispelled, were above and below, shooting down to the coves. But the view was beautiful. The near hills looked soft and green, and beyond the sea to the right was the shadowy outline of the Scottish mountains.

Coleridge was unable to join in these expeditions. He had managed somehow to run a thorn into his leg, and this had caused some suppuration.

He had now given up the idea of going abroad and was preparing to go to London in November.

He left Keswick on November 10th. Dorothy accompanied William to Keswick to see him off. About two o'clock William and she started for home. The day was beautiful, but Dorothy could take little pleasure in it. She was tired and agitated. Everything she passed reminded her of Coleridge, of the many times he had come hurrying over to see them, full of life and animation and gorgeous talk, of other times when he arrived looking feverish and

ill. He had seemed recently hopeless about his life, and had talked strangely about his future or his lack of future. Suddenly she found herself weeping. William, not caring to see her thus deeply moved, rebuked her, with unexpected roughness, for nervous blubbering.

After that she was silent. It was nine o'clock when they reached home.

Mary Hutchinson was with them for the remainder of the year. She settled most pleasantly into their life and ways, and got to care for their friends. The Symptons often came over in the evenings, and William and Mary would often accompany them for a little on their way back, on the clear frosty nights. The Olliffs and the Luffs came now and again, and Mr. Clarkson would sometimes ride up to the door in his whirling busy way, protesting that he could not stay, but sometimes remaining to talk till late in the night or to play cards. Mary went with Dorothy to Eusemere to visit Mrs. Clarkson, who was too delicate to come out much in the winter. William took her to Ambleside one wet November day to visit the Lloyds, while Dorothy spent her time at home baking and writing to Sara Hutchinson and Coleridge. The evening was somewhat wild and the wind roared so that she feared the walk would be too stormy to be pleasant, but when at nine o'clock Mary and William came in, they had an air of complete happiness. There was a kind of bloom on Mary's face as if the rain had coloured it delicately.

One showery Monday morning in December Dorothy and Mary rose by candlelight, for they were to go to Keswick to see Mrs. Coleridge and the children and wished to start off early. About nine o'clock they set out, on horseback, Dorothy trusting herself to Mary, who, she said, was "a famous jockey." They had a cold time upon the Raise, for the snow fell heavily, and the whole prospect closed in on them; the hills were blotted out so that the Raise was like a moorland road upon a very wild moor. When they got to the top of the Raise the sun shone out and they saw again the mountains before them.

It was about one o'clock when they reached Keswick. Derwent, fat and beautiful, was asleep in the cradle. Hartley was at

his dinner. Mrs. Coleridge had to go out in the afternoon, and Dorothy and Mary had tea by themselves, the children playing about them. Mary said to Hartley: "Shall I take Derwent with me?"

"No," said Hartley in the sweetest way possible, "I cannot spare my little brother, and he can't do without his mamma."

"Well, why can't I be his mamma?" said Mary. "Can't he have more mammas than one?"

"No," said Hartley with firmness.

"What for?" said Mary.

"Because they do not love, and mothers do."

"What is the difference between mothers and mammas?" said Mary, interested.

Hartley was puzzled for a moment, but then, looking at his sleeves, he endeavoured to demonstrate the difference.

"Mothers wear sleeves like this," he said, pulling his sleeves tight down to look like his mother's, "and mammas so," and he pulled them up and made a bustle about his little shoulders.

Dorothy listened to the conversation, much amused.

At four o'clock, just a little before dusk, they set out for home. Riding briskly, they reached home about seven o'clock. Later in the evening Dorothy wrote to Coleridge, telling him how she had found his babes.

Mary, although a good horsewoman, was by no means as fond of walking, for walking's sake, as Dorothy. She liked to have a reason for walking. Most of her walks were about Grasmere. Many times she went to Rydal or Ambleside with Dorothy or William for letters; once William took her to Ambleside with him to help him to buy mouse-traps. Often with William she accompanied Dorothy into Easedale to gather mosses. One afternoon at the end of November when Dorothy was expecting visitors to tea, they went with her into Easedale to fetch cream. The afternoon was piercing cold. When Dorothy hurried back to them from the farm to which she had gone for the cream, she was afraid they would be perished with the cold, but she found them sitting together under a wall, quite happy, and snug and sheltered from the wind.

During her walks Dorothy thought always of Coleridge. Each time she looked on something more than ordinarily beautiful and transitory—the moon and the moonlight seen through scudding clouds, a favourite birch tree yielding to the gusty wind with all its tender twigs and glancing as the sun shone on it like a flying sunshiny shower, the river in spate rushing past the church in the dark, Churn Milk Force like a broad stream of snow, she wished Coleridge could look upon it at the moment she did.

Often she outstripped Mary and William. One day when she had left the others behind, she stopped by herself to look at the birches red-brown and glittering on the crags, and at the ashes like upright spears. The hips were bright red and beautiful. Remembering how good Coleridge thought them, she pulled twenty for him and ate them as he was not there to eat them himself. There was a kind of secret joy in this.

Almost the pleasantest times of these winter days was the evening, when they all gathered round the fire, and worked or were lazy as they pleased. William was still for the most part disinclined for the effort of composing, but he read a good deal of Chaucer and the Elizabethan poets; at times he altered a word or two in his narrative poems. Mary and Dorothy read, or sewed, or wrote letters. They saw no new books.

Often as they sat in the evenings Dorothy would hear Peggy Ashburner coughing, and the sound would trouble her. When she had something unusually nice for dinner she liked to send some of it to Peggy. One day when she had goose she tried to tempt Peggy's appetite with a plateful of it. Peggy was instant in sending back a present of honey. In the evening Dorothy went in to thank her. She feared that Peggy was coughing her life away, but old Molly was more cheerful. "Poor body!" said she when Dorothy returned, "she's very ill, but one does not know how long she may last. Many a fair face may gang before her."

The evening was a little rainy, but William went up to John's Grove to walk under the trees in the moonlight. As he was long in returning Dorothy put her sewing aside after a time and followed

him. She was amazed to find him shaken and trembling after a very curious experience. He had been surprised by terror. A sudden rushing together of winds which seemed to make the earth and sky meet had given him the feeling that the hills and the sky were about to close in on him. This was an old childish fear, suddenly, unexpectedly rearing its head.

As Christmas drew near the snows were deep. On the Sunday before Christmas it snowed heavily all day. The brooms in the garden waved gently under the weight of the snow. Dorothy thought them very beautiful, like arched feathers with wiry stalks pointed to the end, ever and ever smaller.

The snow was not deep enough to prevent walking. On the Tuesday Dorothy accompanied William down the White Moss. For a time they stopped to watch a beautiful little bird, with a salmon-coloured breast and a white cross upon its wings, which advanced fearlessly to them until it was within reach of William's stick.

The snow made everything lovely. The stone at the top of the hill had a white curtain upon it, soft as down, and the rock behind, of a vivid green, looked soft as velvet against it. In the centre was a young foxglove, like a star. A few green lichens and withered brackens were near. Otherwise there was no mark, not even the track of a sheep.

On the White Moss itself they met an old man with two bags hanging over his shoulders and lying on each side of him, below his breast. Dorothy took in at a glance his grey hair, his decent hat worn brown and glossy, his thin shoes that had once belonged to a gentleman, his blue coat that had been let out at the seams with a lighter blue, and with bell-shaped patches of darker blue where the buttons had been, his fustian breeches, checked shirt and the small coloured handkerchief tied round his neck. One of the bags was brownish, the other was white on the outside with meal that had whitened also the blue waistcoat. Noticing these things, Dorothy passed on in silence. Then her heart smote her and she turned back and spoke to him.

"You are begging?"

"Aye," said he.

Dorothy gave him a halfpenny.

"I suppose you were a sailor," William put in.

"Aye," he replied, "I have been fifty-seven years at sea, twelve of them on board a man-of-war under Sir Hugh Palmer."

"Why have you not got a pension?" said William.

"I have no pension," said the old man, "but I could have got into Greenwich Hospital, but all my officers are dead."


Later they overtook old Fleming, of Rydal, leading his grand-child along the slippery road and looking proud of his charge. The same pace suited the uncertain footsteps of the old man and of the child.

On Christmas Eve they all sat round the fire for a time and read Chaucer. Then Dorothy took out her old journal and gave herself up to reverie. Christmas Eve with her was always a night of retrospect.

Christmas Day was her birthday. They had meant to be very gay, but a letter from Coleridge dashed their spirits and spoilt the day for them. It was written in utter dejection. There were phrases in it describing his lassitude and dejection, that could rend the heart. Dorothy felt a distress so acute as to affect her physically. She was glad she was not by herself when the letter came.

The next day they all walked to Rydal. The colours were very beautiful. Grasmere lake was clear as glass; the fields were of a soft yellow, the copses red-brown, the mountains purple. The church and the houses had an air of extraordinary peace. Dorothy thought of Coleridge who had been with them on that day the previous year, along with Sara Hutchinson and little Derwent. She thought much of the "desert home" under Skiddaw.

In the evening she wrote to Coleridge. William, who had recently shown signs that the old fires were burning up in him again, took out the long-neglected *Poem to Coleridge* and began to work on the third part of the poem.



CHAPTER IV

The parting Genius is with sighing sent.

MILTON.

THREE days after Christmas they all set out on foot for Keswick. William, who was still composing, found that the cold bright day suited his mood and went off by himself. Dorothy and Mary did not see much of him until he joined them at John Stanley's inn for dinner. They reached Keswick at about half-past five, weary after their day's sauntering, and found Mrs. Coleridge and the children well.

After tea William went off to meet his friend Wilkinson of Ormathwaite, who had passed him on the road and invited him to sup at The Oak. The next morning was fine; the fog of the hills soon cleared away, and they decided to walk to the Clarksons' farm at Ullswater, from which Mary, who wished to be with her friends at Penrith on New Year's Day, could easily walk to Penrith.

Wilkinson accompanied them to the top of the hill above Keswick. After they had passed the cluster of houses at the foot of St. John's Vale, their road lay along the sides of bare hills. Skiddaw was behind; Saddleback to the left was covered with snow. As they ascended the hills they felt the exceeding sharpness of the air, and walking was slippery, but the wind at their backs helped them on. At the head of Matterdale a sharp hail shower gathered; the cottages seen through the hurrying hail looked wild, and the hills large and swelling through the eddying storm.

They dined at the inn on porridge and Christmas pies, and afterwards the landlord went with them for about a mile and a half to put them in the right way. The wind was high, the road very slippery, and the walking so rough that Mary kept stumbling and falling. Dorothy too had difficulty in keeping her footing. In some places it was easier to crawl than to walk.

In spite of the landlord's directions they were not at all sure that

they were in the right way. They were glad to meet on the hills a young man who redirected them. Later, on coming to some houses, they were directed by a wretched poverty-bitten woman who had been fetching water, to go down a miry lane. As it was late afternoon, they were glad to find that the lane led to the main road.

Walking was now quite easy. As the twilight came on Dorothy remembered very vividly her first visit to the Clarksons, when the lights of the house had twinkled in the darkness and William and she had walked out of the night into a welcome eager and almost affectionate from Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson, while little Tommy, who had been put into trousers for the first time that day, stood by, shy and conscious of his new clothes. Dorothy felt the same sense of welcome enfolding her when they came within sight of the white spot at the foot of Ullswater and the welcoming lights in the windows. They arrived just at tea-time.

Dorothy loved the Clarksons' house. She could sit for hours in the windows, spellbound by the loveliness on which she looked. The view from the drawing-room window affected her again and again as having an unearthly beauty.

In the morning they went out with Mr. Clarkson to look over the farm and grounds. In the kitchen garden Mrs. Clarkson's speckled hens were pecking in the grass. The hops with which Mr. Clarkson was experimenting seemed to have survived the winter. William had to give his opinion on the trees. The alders were doing well, and the other trees, planted upon a bank where they were sheltered by willows or planted near the house, were flourishing, but the unsheltered trees were puny and stunted. Dorothy, used to the rapid growth of the trees in Grasmere, thought the growth very slight. She half wished Mr. Clarkson had planted willows and alders all the way.

They walked on Dun Mallet before dinner, till the snow coming on sent them indoors.

On New Year's Eve Mary set out for Penrith. Dorothy and William, who walked with her to Stainton Bridge, had the pleasant feeling that they were still within hail of her, for Mrs. Clarkson,

who was beginning to have a great affection for Dorothy, had persuaded them to spend the greater part of January at Eusemere.

They had a delightful time. The weather was for the most part frosty, so they were able to be out every morning. In the evenings they talked or played cards. Mrs. Clarkson amused them with many stories about the members of her family, and the humours of some of the people she had known. Mr. Clarkson told stories of his boyhood, of walking from London to Wisbech, of schoolboy journeyings, of a bull-baiting by men at Wisbech which he remembered. Dorothy made a good listener, for she much liked stories of ways that were passing or past.

Sometimes Mary came from Penrith to see them. Other friends came too. Thomas Wilkinson, with whom William had a good many tastes in common, came from Yanwath. On the 15th they dined with him in his cottage. He was a Quaker and very simple and frugal in his tastes. Dorothy liked him, and his way of living.

After dinner they walked over to Penrith to see Mary. The grasses and trees and hedges were all white with hoar-frost; the sunset was glorious; the frost seemed keener than ever. Yet the next day the frost broke. The 17th, on which Mary returned to Eusemere for a few days, was a day of mild gentle thaw. Stormy weather succeeded the thaw. Thursday the 21st, the day before Mary left, was one of the stormiest days of the winter.

On the Friday, they walked with Mary to Stainton Bridge, where they were to part from her. To delay the moment a little, when they got near the bridge, they went into a field that sloped downwards to a meadow round which the Eamont flowed in a small half-circle. It reminded them of the meadows at Sockburn watered by the Tees. They sat for some time under a wall in the sunshine. Mary was much affected at the parting. Dorothy felt her own heart beginning to beat fast in sympathy. "Mary will always remember this place," she thought. "As often as she passes the gate she will turn in to look at these fields."

The 23rd, on which Dorothy and William left Eusemere, was a very stormy morning. Yet William wanted to walk over Grise-

dale Hawes. They set out riding, Dorothy behind William, while Mr. Clarkson accompanied them on his Galloway. The mountains were only thinly streaked with snow, but the wind was strong and piercing.

At Grisedale they fortified themselves for the rest of the way with a meal of ham, bread and milk. Mr. Clarkson left them at one o'clock and they began their walk. The weather was now very rough. The rain came down steadily and they had to struggle with the wind; before they reached the tarn they were met by a shower of hail, and the way became difficult over the snow, which was blowing towards them like smoke. At the tarn the view closed in and they could see nothing but mists and snow, though they could hear the splitting and cracking of the ice on the tarn below. They saw four sheep in the snow, but no footmark either of man or beast. When they left the tarn behind they lost their path, and for a time they were afraid of being overtaken by the darkness while they were yet bewildered by the mists. William tried to steer their course by a heap of stones which he remembered, and at length they knew that they were in the right path. The mists suddenly broke, and then the sense of danger vanished like a dream, for they saw the vale of Grasmere far below, looking soft and grave. It was dark before they reached home.

When they had removed their wet clothes and were sitting by a singing fire, they savoured to the full the pleasure of homecoming. The day's expedition had put William in mind of the mountains of Switzerland, and they began to talk about the lake of Como. This made them take down a copy of the *Descriptive Sketches*. They read for a little, talked in a lazy kind of way, and were very happy.

In the morning they went out into the orchard as soon as breakfast was over, and enjoyed the Sunday quietness that rested over Grasmere. Their winter friends among the birds fluttered around as if glad to see them. The thrush who made his home in the orchard came towards them with short impetuous rushes. They lingered for a time, looking at the cottage, and planning a new room, off the bedroom they kept as a guest-room.

Many things gave Dorothy a sense of homecoming. Molly was overjoyed to see her; Jenny Dockeray sent milk and eggs; as she passed the Nab Cottage and stopped to look at the baby the woman of the cottage made her accept a little gift of nuts. Frank Baty, one of their neighbours, asked them to tea on the Wednesday. Mr. Olliff came to get their news and invite them to tea and cards on the Thursday afternoon.

Everybody was surprised that William should have ventured to cross over Grisedale after the great storm of the previous Thursday.

The ravages of this storm were visible everywhere in the valley. Dorothy was grieved to see the havoc done among the trees in John's Grove. A larch, one of the very finest trees, had been uprooted. Another great tree lay with the turf about its roots clean cut as if with a knife. Several others were twisted and one had been snapped.

William got to work at once after his month's holiday. Just before Christmas he had begun work on a narrative poem, which he thought of publishing, with one or two short pieces, under the title of *The Pedlar*. He worked on this poem throughout the week of his return, but none too successfully, so that at times he was very depressed. On the Thursday evening, as Dorothy and he were returning from the Olliffs, he was in miserable spirits. The rain and the darkness—it was so dark that they had to carry a lantern—added to his depression, and after going to bed he could not sleep. At a quarter past three he called out to Dorothy to ask the time. The night seemed intolerably long to him.

After breakfast Dorothy read to him to try to send him to sleep, for she saw that he was worn out by lack of rest. In the afternoon they both walked to Ambleside, and gradually, under the influence of the soft grave lights of evening, his depression wore away; a rich yellow light rested on the fields and the waters of the lake were purple. When they were returning, the sky too was a soft purple, and the stars were out. Dorothy pointed out Jupiter, shining behind the lake. William, laughing, told her that she always called the largest star Jupiter. When they got home they found that the

letter from Coleridge they had brought back with them was heart-rending in its tale of illness and misery. William's depression returned, heavier than ever. Dorothy felt as if stupefied.

On the Saturday William worked at *The Pedlar* most of the day, and again he had a bad night. On the Sunday they put work aside and went out for a dallying walk by the lake. Dorothy thought of the first time she had seen the lake, shining in the light of the setting sun. William spoke of the day on which he had first taken Coleridge to Grasmere.

They sat by the roadside at the foot of the lake, close to a stone on which Mary had carved her name. William began trimming the letters with his knife. Dorothy filled her handkerchief with mosses for the chimney-piece. When looking for these, she found a strawberry blossom on a rock. Charmed by the brave way in which the slender flower had opened itself out, while the timid leaves surrounding it were only half blown, she uprooted the plant for her garden. Then, feeling as if she had committed an outrage, she replanted the frail adventurer. "It will have but a stormy life of it," she thought, "but let it live if it can."

February opened stormily. On the first day of the month Dorothy noticed a curious purple light hanging over the woods near Greenhead Ghyll. Looking over to Silver How she saw that the sides of the mountain were swept by a strange stormy mist reddish-purple in colour. This was followed by heavy rains. The week passed in much the same way as the previous one. William kept working at *The Pedlar*, but his work exhausted him and did not please him. His worst moments were when he could find no fault with any part of the poem, yet felt somehow that as a whole it was dull. He felt that Coleridge would know what was wrong with it and would be able to help him to make a new start. He wished that Coleridge would come North.

Most of their walks were now to Rydal or Ambleside for letters. They were always hoping to hear from Coleridge or Mary or Sara Hutchinson. On the afternoon of the second Monday in February they set out towards Rydal to see if any letters had come. Before

they had come to the shore of the lake, Dorothy met her friend the patient bow-backed carrier, with his little wooden box strapped to his back.

"Where are you going?" said he.

"To Rydal for letters."

"I have two for you in my box," said he, delighted. They lifted up the lid, and there lay a letter from Coleridge and one from Montagu. They broke the seal of Coleridge's just to see whether he was well. Then Dorothy put the letter in her pocket—but at the top of the White Moss she took it to her bosom, thinking that the safer place. The night was wild with a stormy glitter in the sky. The moon came out when they reached John's Grove. Dorothy repeated to herself softly "and a star or two beside," as she looked at it and saw one or two stars twinkling above the trees.

As soon as they got home William replied to Coleridge's letter, and then, feeling tired and nervous, he went to bed, leaving Dorothy to write to Montagu, William Calvert, Mary, and Mrs. Coleridge. It chanced that he had left her with a little peat fire which soon faded away to a dull glow, and she dared not go into the pantry for fresh supplies for fear of wakening him. She wrote until her fingers were numb with cold. At two o'clock she went out to put her batch of letters under Fletcher's door. She thought she had never felt such a cold night. There was a hard frost and the wind was cutting. On coming in she gathered together all the clothes she could find without disturbing William, and went to bed. But for a long time she could not sleep from cold.

In the morning all her bones ached and she felt dull and stupid, and too tired to walk. As she sat indoors, she saw passing the cottage the funeral of a poor woman who had got up during the night and drowned herself in a pond. The woman had been married the previous May, and had been ailing and unhappy ever since.

She had asked to be buried beside her mother.

"Aye," said Molly, as they watched the procession, a few men on horseback, the woman's sister, and a cart full of women, "folks thinks o' their mothers."

During these stormy days a great many wanderers had been passing through the village, beggars, broken men, bowed soldiers, and poor people, not altogether homeless, but always on the verge of misery and now plunged into destitution by the winter storms. Dorothy always talked to those who came begging to her door, and gave them the bread for which they asked, sometimes adding, when she had it, a piece of cheese or meat or cold bacon. One day there came a little lad she had met eighteen months before on a summer's day languidly walking in a lane near Skelwith Bridge, and carrying a meal pole on his shoulder, for he had been sent out, he said, to "lait a lock" of meal. Dorothy, struck by his delicate air, had asked him if he got enough to eat.

"Nay!" he had replied, seeming surprised at such a question.

He had been wearing on that June day a drab coat. When he appeared at the door of the cottage, Dorothy's heart ached to see that he was still wearing the same coat, and that although very ragged, it was still large enough for him. His mother was with him, a woman who had once been strong and beautiful, but who now looked quite broken. Dorothy remarked to her that the little lad had scarcely grown at all, and that he looked thin and pale.

"Aye," said she, "we have all been ill. Our house was nearly unroofed in the storm, and we lived in it so for more than a week."

The child reminded Dorothy of Basil. It was cold work for one so meagre to be tramping when the snow still lay on the ground.

There were many such. As evening came on, Dorothy heard the sound of a child's crying. She went to the window and had just time to see that a man was passing driving a cart, while a woman with a baby in her arms followed him and a dog kept close. There was something wild and melancholy in their appearance, as they hurried along at the closing in of the day.

The candles were brought in and lighted and William sought inspiration in polishing his table before getting to work. Dorothy sat for some time at the unclosed windows. Her heart was full of pity for all homeless folk.

2

In the middle of February the weather became fine and sunny after hard frost. The eaves dripped in the sun; the snow on the island melted in a night; the first snowdrops appeared, short-stemmed as if they were afraid to push their little white heads far out lest the cold should snap them off.

The second Sunday of the month was exceedingly fine. William, who had been sauntering in the orchard, felt the allurements of the day, and suddenly declared that he must go to Penrith to see Mary before he could settle down to work any more. In a moment all was bustle. Dorothy hastily finished making a fair copy of *The Pedlar* for him to take with him, wrote a letter to Mrs. Clarkson, as William was to go by Kirkstone and Ullswater, and put together some letters for Mary. Molly was sent for the horse. Presently they watched "Master" ride off, very smart in his blue spencer and a pair of new pantaloons fresh from London.

Dorothy spent most of the day by the fire reading. Towards evening, she went out for a walk among the rocks above the cottage. As she lingered, admiring the flecks of light cast on the snow-covered mountains by the rich sunlight, she saw a picturesque band of travellers come toiling up the steep road—a carman, with four carts, the first three of which evidently belonged to himself, while the last belonged to a family of potters who were in his train. The carman, a Highlander, Dorothy thought, was cheering his horses and talking, in much the same way as he talked to the horses, to a little girl of about ten years old who was evidently very happy in his company and who watched his every need. Running to the wall the child, with an uncommon joyousness of look and gesture, took up a large stone to support the wheel of one of the carts, and ran before with it in her arms to be ready at exactly the right moment. She was beautiful and free in her movements as if all she did were a pleasure to her, and the man watched her with beaming looks. The mother, bright and clear of skin, followed, a little out of breath with climbing the steep hill, and carrying a

lovely child of perhaps a year old. A handsome girl walked beside her.

It gave Dorothy pleasure to meet such as these, not the laborious poor turned from the shelter of their homes and driven wretchedly by poverty into unknown ways, but true people of the road, used to travelling from birth, lacking neither clothes nor food, gay as the wild birds, and brave and free. She could have found it in her heart to join them.

William came back on the Tuesday. He had only seen Mary for a couple of hours between Eamont Bridge and Hartshorn Tree, but Dorothy thought he seemed well content to have ridden forty miles to have seen her and talked with her even for that short time.

By the end of the week the snowdrops were quite out, and on the next Sunday Dorothy's thrush shouted and sang its merriest all day long from the highest of the smooth branches of the ash tree at the top of the orchard, while the robins kept up a cheerful undersong. It was as if spring had come.

William was still busy altering *The Pedlar*. By the end of the month he had not succeeded in finishing it. On the Wednesday of the first week in March Dorothy said she thought she ought to make a fair copy of the poem. This was a most unlucky suggestion, for William got to work, and tired himself to death.

The next day he put it aside and went off at about half-past eleven to Keswick to see William Calvert. He left in such a hurry that his clothes lay about his room here, there and everywhere. Dorothy folded them, put the drawers in order, filed the newspapers of the past two months, dined off a couple of eggs and apple tarts, set Molly to some work in the garden, and then, determined not to give way to depression, set out to walk round the lakes. But at the foot of Rydal, where William and she always made a pause in their walks, she sat down for a little, and in spite of herself gave way to sad thoughts.

Her walk next day was in Easedale, where she went to gather mosses. The afternoon was frosty and sunny. She saw, enjoying

the day like herself, her old friend the ragman, sitting in the sunshine in an open field on his pack of rags, his coat of scarlet, patched in a thousand places, making a vivid spot amid the green of the grass.

Sitting alone in the evening, she found herself again yielding to melancholy. William, Mary, Sara, Coleridge—her thoughts of them all turned to sadness. William and Mary loved each other deeply. Their love had been born of no passionate impulse, which might have been checked, but had stolen upon them gradually, silently, invisibly in the past eight years, and could not now be denied, even if they had wished to deny it. But what future was there for it? How could William support a wife? And what of the poor French girl still waiting for him? And now Coleridge seemed to be taking little Sara into his heart in the same imperceptible way, so that his home life was becoming poisoned for him, and at times he seemed almost to hate the fetters he had imposed on himself. Dorothy could not understand his feeling for Sara. Sometimes it seemed to her no real thing, but a nervous fancy which he was permitting to destroy his peace. Her heart refused to accept it. Her mind rebelled against it. Surely it would pass like a sick man's dream. Yet it was tormenting.

William, Annette, Mary, Sara, Coleridge—the names kept weaving a circle around her from which there was no escape.

She took up her German book and tried to study, but found she could not go on. At last she gave up the attempt and went outside. For a long time she watched the sky. The moon hung above Silver How, over the Northern side of the highest point; looking like a gold ring, snapped in two and shaven off at the ends.

When William came home on the Sunday, after being away for three days, he brought with him two new stanzas of *Ruth*, but he was still preoccupied with *The Pedlar*. Towards the end of the week he was caught up in a burst of inspiration which made his toil from the beginning of the year seem but faint. Each day he was busy at a new poem. On Thursday he wrote *The Singing Bird*; on Friday, *Alice Fell*, after which he went to bed weary in mind

and body; on Saturday, *The Beggar Woman*. On the Sunday, while they were at breakfast, he composed *To a Butterfly*.

On the Monday he was beguiled from this excessive labour by a chance visitor. While he was out walking, a young man, faint and pale but very well dressed, knocked at the cottage door, and Dorothy, thinking him a little like John, got into talk with him. He told her that his name was Isaac Chapel, and that he was a sailor, travelling from Liverpool to Whitehaven. He had not been in bed since the Friday night. When William returned, Dorothy was sitting by the kitchen fire talking to the stranger. They all sat over the fire for about two hours, and the sailor, who was such a guest as Mr. Clarkson loved to entertain, told them his story. Twice he had been pressed; twice he had escaped by swimming from a king's ship in the night. His last voyage had been to the coast of Guinea. He had been in a slave ship, commanded by Captain Maxwell, and was going to wait in England to give evidence against the captain. "Oh, he's a rascal, Sir," said he to William; "he ought to be put in the papers," and he went on to tell, among other things, how a boy had been put to lodge with the pigs and been half eaten, how one man had died of violence and another had been set to watch in the blazing sun till he dropped down dead.

On the Tuesday William was again deep in composition. After dinner Dorothy read him to sleep, and afterwards, when he was rested, they went together to Rydal. The moon was high above the mountains. Two stars beside her twinkled in and out. They seemed to Dorothy like butterflies in the sky.

Dorothy, seeing William so often shaken, uncertain as to what to do about Mary, uncertain about his future, yet when the impulse to compose came upon him carried quite beyond these things into another and more overwhelming kind of trouble, felt for him a passionate tenderness. Yet almost the only thing she could do for him was to try to help him to rest. On the Wednesday she spent most of the morning sitting in the orchard with him, or pacing to and fro with him while he composed. In the afternoon

she read to him. Exquisite feeling filled her heart when she saw that she had read him to sleep, and her thoughts were tranquil and happy as she went out to walk by the side of Rydal lake. It was a quiet hour. The hills and the lake were still; the owls had not begun to hoot; the little birds had stopped their singing. On Silver How there rested a strange red glow. The strangeness and the stillness moved Dorothy so that she found herself seeking for rhythms in which to express them, but just as she was putting word to word she saw William coming to meet her. They turned back to see the light, but it was fading, almost gone. They sat down on the wall at the foot of the White Moss. Then the silence was broken. The owls began to hoot; John Green passed in a rumbling cart, going home after his day's work to his house under Silver How. The sky broke into its evening radiance: at length the moon appeared. The vale was soon in bright moonshine that showed the church and all the cottages. Huge clouds, slow travelling in the sky, threw masses of shade upon some of the mountains.

William was reluctant to go in. After they returned home, Dorothy and he paced up and down for some time before the cottage; then he kindled to his work again. They carried cloaks into the orchard and sat there for a time. Presently Dorothy went to bed, feeling singularly tired. When William had finished his poem he brought it in for her to hear.

A day followed that was no less beautiful. In the late afternoon they went to Ambleside for letters. As Dorothy was returning in the evening by herself, the hills loomed large, closed in by the sky, and the moon was overcast, but just as she climbed the White Moss, the moon came out from behind a mass of bright clouds. Dorothy was moved, suddenly, passionately and profoundly by the glorious brightness, contrasting with the darkness of earth and sky. On Rydal water there was one vivid sparkling streak of light, while the rest was dark. Silver How and Loughrigg Fell were white and bright, as if hoar-frost lay on them. Once there was no moonlight to be seen except upon the island-house among the waters. Looking on the soft bright light on the lowly building in the waters, among the dark and lofty hills, Dorothy felt

that the beauty was making of her, too, more than half a poet. Such beauty was enough to break the heart. Again she was shaken with the longing to find words to express what she saw. When she got home she sought for word and rhythm, but presently, restless and dissatisfied with what she had done, she gave up the attempt and, weary of waiting for William to come in, she went to bed.

All these days they were constantly expecting to hear from Coleridge, who had reached Keswick at the beginning of the week, or even to see him walking in on them at any moment. On the Friday morning it was so wet that they both gave up hope of his coming on such a day. William went out to compose in the rain. Dorothy went up the lane to collect some mosses with which to brighten the room. She had returned and she was just thinking that Coleridge would never come in such wind and rain, when in he walked.

Dorothy was much affected by the sight of him. But she missed the old glad, rapturous, extravagant, impulsive greeting. There was about him something of slackness or apathy. As he took off his wet coat he seemed half stupefied. His eyes, which were a little swollen by the wind, had the look of a man in a dream.

3

When William came in he was overjoyed to find that Coleridge had come. Frequent as had been his letters to Coleridge, and Dorothy's, they all had much to discuss. Coleridge had been hoping that soon after his return to the North, William would marry, and that William, Mary and Dorothy would accompany him abroad and settle down as his neighbours and companions in some country where the climate was sunny and mild. For William and Dorothy it was not so easy to know what was best to do. Quite apart from any complication of feelings, they were troubled about ways and means. It was difficult enough for them to feed and clothe themselves, and make some provision for Annette, out of their small income, even although they lived with the utmost economy and the rent of Dove Cottage was only £8 a year.

Mary had a little money of her own, but even with that, they would have very little. John had said that he would make money for them, and they believed in him; there was always the chance that the Lonsdale debt might be paid—but these things were not certainties. Also Mary had no great desire to go abroad. She would have preferred that they should all live at Gallow Hill, as they had all lived together at Sockburn.

Dorothy set her face against this. She was quite determined that William and she should not leave Grasmere for Gallow Hill. But as she listened to William and Coleridge talking, her heart filled with feeling that was deep and painful.

It was late when Coleridge went to bed. Dorothy and William remained by the fire till four in the morning. Dorothy could not conceal her distress, but William's sweet and tender words drove her confused sense of trouble again down into the recesses of her mind.

On the Monday they came to a decision. William was to go to Gallow Hill to see what he could arrange with Mary, and Dorothy and he would take advantage of the peace with France to go to see Annette and Caroline during the summer, and make some arrangement with them and for them, as fair as any arrangement could now be.

During the remainder of the week they passed their time much as they had done since the beginning of the year; William was busy with a poem on the cuckoo, and with revising his other poems; Dorothy read to him, walked with him, and studied German in her spare moments. But an undercurrent of deep feeling was moving them both. It was in the evenings, as they sat by the fire, reading or writing, that this was strongest. There were times when they hardly dared to speak to each other, because there was that in their hearts which it was better not to probe. The fluttering of the flame, the ticking of the watch above their heads, the movement of William, sitting at the little green table by the fireplace, as he pushed forward his book or turned the pages, the faint sound of his breathing—fleeting sounds deepening the silence of the room—would suddenly become to Dorothy exquisite, perilously dear.

They set out on the last Sunday of the month for Keswick, where they spent a week with the Coleridges, and visited the Calverts and the Wilkinsons of Ormathwaite. One evening Dorothy went with Mrs. Wilkinson to a Quakers' meeting, and was much interested in what she saw. On Monday April 5th they went to Eusemere, and there Dorothy remained while William went on to Gallow Hill. She would have enjoyed greatly the restful days on the farm and the company of Tommy and the cosy fire-lit afternoons with Mrs. Clarkson, were it not that all the time the thought of William and his difficulties was with her. She longed constantly for letters, even although she knew that she could not hope to hear for several days. By the end of the week no word had come, and so on the evening of Monday April 12th, restless and impatient, she walked over to Yanwath in the snow, and sent from Thomas Wilkinson's cottage to inquire at Penrith for letters. At last a letter from William and Mary had come. She had only time to glance at it before returning to Eusemere. The night being wild and gusty, Thomas Wilkinson started out with her. He questioned her all the way about William, and, kind as he was, each of his questions was to her like the snapping of a thread about her heart. She was glad when he went and she could walk on by herself, her eyes noting half mechanically the moon scudding through the skies, while her thoughts, at once sweet and painful, played with her half-read letter.

The next day William returned. Mary had agreed to marry him after his return from France, and to make her home with them at Dove Cottage.

On the Thursday they set out from Eusemere after dinner, intending to walk home by way of Patterdale. Mrs. Clarkson walked with them for a little, until driven back by the furious wind. Dorothy and William walked as quickly as they could, resting now and again as the wind almost took their breath away, and enjoying what they saw. Passing through Gowbarrow Park they saw the stately grey shapes of the deer reflected in the water. In the woods beyond the Park they noticed a few daffodils close to the waterside.

As they went along there were more and more of these, until presently they saw along the shore of the lake a long belt of shining flowers, some of them resting their weary heads as on a pillow on the mossy stones among which they grew, while others tossed their gay and laughing heads in the wind that blew upon them from the lake.

The long golden wedge was most beautiful to see.

They put up for the night in Patterdale. After a glass of hot rum and water they settled down to enjoy themselves by a good fire with such books as they found in the inn, a volume of Enfield's *Speaker*, and an odd volume of Congreve's plays. The night became very stormy.

In the morning the wind had passed; the sun shone; the hills looked cheerful and they walked dallyingly in the pleasant day. The country showed everywhere the coming of spring—primroses were out by the roadside; violets strewed the grass; the pilewort showed like stars of gold in the sun.

The sights and sounds of this pleasant day delighted them no less than the gusty pleasure of the day before. As they rested on the turf near one of the bridges before Brothers' Water, they were amused to see a sheep, that had been frightened by an insignificant little dog on the other side, come plunging through the river and stumbling up the bank so close as almost to bedew them with the glittering shower that dropped from the fleece. Between Brothers' Water and Kirkstone people were at work everywhere, ploughing, harrowing, sowing. Near Kirkstone they talked with two girls at work with pitchfork and spade—who sent after them peal after peal of challenging laughter. At the foot of Kirkstone they ate their dinner.

They rested for a time above Ambleside. Dorothy noticed as they sat looking down on the vale that the crows flying at a little distance became white as silver, and looked like shapes of water passing over the green fields.

At Ambleside they stopped for a minute to call on Luff, who had been ill. The evening brightness was on Rydal water as they passed, and as they drew towards home they saw an interlacing of

ash-sticks binding a half-dead hedge together at the top beginning to shine like a chain of silver in the white light of the moon.

They found in the morning that after their absence for three weeks there was much to be done in the garden. William dug a little; Dorothy transplanted some honeysuckle. The day was mild and warm, with a soft rain falling. Dorothy, seeing a robin chasing a scarlet butterfly, felt although the day was Easter Saturday that summer had already come to meet the winter in one vivid moment.

Coleridge came at the beginning of the next week to hear their news. He spent the week with them. This was the beginning of a summer in some ways like the Alfoxden summer. Coleridge constantly came to see them, or they walked to Keswick to see him, or they all three met at one of the rocks midway between Grasmere and Keswick. William and Coleridge exchanged poems and talked every time they met of poetry and criticism and metaphysics.

It was like that earlier summer, and yet it was different. Dorothy could no longer think that Coleridge, William and she were but one soul. William treated her with an extraordinary tenderness. When she feared that there might not be room for her in his life after his marriage, he kissed her fears away. He said to her that he would never let her go, that he needed her above and beyond everything and everybody. He enveloped her with his love. His intensity of feeling set his imagination on fire. He seemed for a time to live in her words, to drink her thoughts. She could hardly talk to him of what she saw from day to day, or of the little things of their childhood, without setting his heart ablaze. He kept bringing her verses in which his words were like the words of a lover. Sometimes, she thought he was more like a lover to her than to Mary. As he lay on the ground near her in John's Grove one morning conscious of her breathing, of the rustling of her dress now and then, he told her he thought it would be sweet so to lie in the grave and know that loved ones were near.

And yet there was in this tenderness something that wounded, something of excess, something akin to remorse, something reminding Dorothy that such days were in their nature fleeting and

self-consuming. Their poignancy and tumult made her realize that there was something she could not give, which Mary could give in abundance, to his blood and spirit, the sweetness of peace. William would never be at rest until he had drawn Mary's tranquil life into his own.

Coleridge sought her out, but his companionship too held in it pain. The keen emotional apprehension of beauty which he had once shared with her had passed. He kept telling her that this was dead, that loveliness no longer moved him, even though it filled his eyes, that the valley unfolding its beauty day by day was to him but a painted show. It was chiefly to talk to her about himself that he came to her, about his worries, most of all about his unhappiness at home and his growing feeling that if he could but have married Sara Hutchinson his life would have been different. His life, he said, was gangrened in its very vitals, because he had no peace or joy in his home. Sara had captured his imagination and he wove all sorts of dreams around her. He wrote verses about her, and brought them to Dorothy, not seeing that he was burdening her spirit. Dorothy listened, tortured, rebellious, unable to believe in the reality of the feeling he was describing, yet trying to give him the relief he sought.

Sometimes when he left her she would feel as one dead. Her sources of life failed her. Even when she looked at the overwhelming beauty of the vale beneath, she could draw no renewal of strength from its beauty.

The sunshine, the green fields, the brilliant colours plying through the sky, could not lighten her heaviness. The flowers by the wayside could no longer send their sweet messages to her, for pain had locked her bosom.

The happy living things could not move her by their joy, or draw her into their communion. Rather she felt that on them too lay the shadow of corruption, of suffering, of unfulfilment, cruellest of all. The crying of the little sporting lambs at the beginning of life seemed the saddest sound in the world.

It was not until the sharpness of the troubled hour was overcome that she could again find healing in earth and sky.

Yet there were moments when the companionship had the old perfection and fullness of experience. As they all walked to Rydal one evening, Coleridge and Dorothy lingered behind while Coleridge stopped up the little runnel by the roadside to make a lake. Dorothy, watching his earnestness over this play, felt the kind of happiness she had known when she listened with him on the Quantocks to the sheep bells.

And there was one day in May that was magical. William and Dorothy set out to meet Coleridge at Wythburn Water. The sunshine was so strong that there was no shade anywhere, except in the shadow of a lofty purple crag near a waterfall, and they ate their dinner on a moss-covered rock rising out of the bed of the river. Their drink was water mixed with a little brandy from Coleridge's flask. Coleridge, lying lazily between the other two, repeated verses. Then it was William's turn. A bird flew round and round the top of the crag, looking in thinness and transparency like a moth. Dorothy suddenly felt that she was in heaven. All on which she looked had in a moment strangeness and beauty. Even the line on the ridge of the backs of the few sheep who were browsing around glittered silver, and made them look beautiful like sheep belonging to a transfigured world.

They had tea at a farmhouse. Afterwards they went along the road to Keswick till they came to the parting-place, a rock on which Coleridge, passing in the morning, had carved his name. After Coleridge had gone, William took out his penknife and deepened the T. Dorothy kissed the letters.

On the last day of May a letter came for William which gave him the keenest pleasure. It was from John Wilson, a young student at Glasgow University, who wrote almost rapturously of the *Lyrical Ballads* in general, although challenging the subject of *The Idiot Boy* as being unfitted for poetry. The letter was in itself interesting. It would have been a delight to William even if it had not been so full of enthusiasm and spirit, because it was a sign that his poetry was at last reaching the kind of readers for whom it was intended, and doing the kind of work it was meant to do.

As the summer wore on, Dorothy was keenly conscious of the rapid fleeting of the precious days. The sight of the last primrose in the garden, the blossoming of the hawthorn on the hills, the coming of the foxglove and the guelder-rose, the swallows nesting at the windows, the fledgelings, innocent bunches of dust-coloured feathers, dazed and fearless, who began to appear in the orchard, were all reminders that the day of departure was drawing near. In the last days before they left, Dorothy got more and more into the way of lengthening out her days by sitting at her bedroom window, thinking and watching, until late into the night. Often the sky had become grey and the little birds were beginning to twitter before she lay down to rest; and she heard the first pure notes of the thrush in the orchard before she closed her eyes.


They were to leave on Friday July 9th and spend a week-end with the Coleridges before beginning their wanderings. The day before their departure Dorothy was busy in the morning with household tasks. In the afternoon she lay down, but did not sleep. She listened to the swallows stealing in and out of their nest at the window, and now and again singing a low twittering song just like a robin, but lower in pitch. When she got up she found that William had taken out *The Pedlar* again, and was arranging it. After tea she copied out two hundred and eighty lines of the poem. In the evening William and she went out to look at the moon, and for some time they walked backwards and forwards on the White Moss path, watching a white sky-like brightness on the lake below. Glow-worms shone along the path.

Dorothy lingered long by her bedroom window after William had gone to bed. Everything was so dear—the swallows that had found shelter in her windows, the well in the garden, the brooms and the roses, the lake, the shadowy hills, the passionate days, sharpened with pain, jewelled with delight.

She thought of the past and the future until thought failed, and feeling, indescribable, inarticulate, tumultuous, took possession of her.

"Dear Mary, William," she breathed the names to herself as if by so doing she could baulk the whelming tide of sadness that was sweeping her back to confused and troubled seas from which she strove to escape.

Then came exhaustion. Fearing to disturb William and bring on one of his restless nights if she gave way to grief, she put out her candle and got into bed.



CHAPTER V

Now, this valley is a very solitary place.

“THE PILGRIM’S PROGRESS.”

BEFORE leaving home they had the satisfaction of hearing that Lord Lowther was going to pay Lord Lonsdale’s debt to the family, a sum of £8500, which was to be divided among them all. This made all arrangements easier and increased their confidence that what they were doing was for the best.

After spending the week-end at Keswick they set out on the Monday to walk to Eusemere. Coleridge accompanied them part of the way. He was in wretched spirits and they were all rather silent. They rested for a time at the seventh milestone, after which Coleridge turned back to Keswick. Dorothy and William, relieved from the oppression of his melancholy, found themselves in a dallying mood. They turned aside from their way to explore the country near Hutton John, which they thought delightful. In the vale of Dacre, they were still under the spell of their loitering rambling mood. During the whole of these delightful hours, spent among brackens and woods and fields, Dorothy felt to the full the lively sights and sounds of the day—the trees on the steep hills, the swallows flying about the bridge by the riverside, the boys looking among the scars for birds’ nests. Yet all the time there was in her heart the movement of sad feeling which she could not quite dismiss. Her thoughts were at once sweet and painful. She lingered long with William in the golden evening, thinking that in the future there might not be many such days. It was about eight o’clock when they reached Eusemere. For once, as they came along in the twilight, Dorothy was almost sorry to see the familiar spot at the foot of Ullswater.

They spent the Tuesday with the Clarksons. On the Wednesday, after walking to Eamont Bridge, they took the coach. Dorothy enjoyed the day’s driving as much as she had enjoyed Monday’s

rambling walk. At Greta Bridge the sun shone brightly; Gatherley Moor was glorious, for the air was so clear that they could see around for miles, and everything was bathed in a mellow light which made the trees seem brighter than mortal trees. Darlington spire was distinct in the golden gleam. ag

At Leeming Lane, which they reached at about nine o'clock, they spent the night. The evening was a trifle sharp, so they had a fire and supped by it, enjoying themselves very much.

They made an early start on Thursday, setting out in a post-chaise at seven in the morning, and stopping at Thirsk for breakfast. The breakfast tasted very good after their drive, but when the landlady understood that they were going to leave their luggage behind and continue their journey on foot she showed her disapproval of their way of travelling in some insolent words uttered while they were yet within hearing, and this for a moment cast a shadow on their pleasure. The day was now very hot, almost too hot for walking, and they rested often before reaching the foot of the Hambleton Hills, and oftener on the hills themselves. Dorothy was feeling tired and a trifle forlorn and almost overpowered with thirst when she heard the trickling of a little stream of water. She sat by this for a long time, looking around her, although a heat-mist prevented her from seeing very far. Even the little Highland cattle on the hills were panting in the heat and were tossing their shaggy hair fretfully about their wild eyes.

By the time she got to Rievaulx she was hungry as well as tired. They had hoped to get something to eat at the miller's, but nothing was to be had, and so they were glad to get some boiled milk and bread at an exquisitely neat farmhouse. Feeling strengthened by this lunch Dorothy went to look at the abbey. Thrushes were singing near the ruins, cows were browsing among the grass-grown hillocks scattered with groves of wild roses and covered with wild flowers. All was very beautiful and quiet. Dorothy would have liked to stay till the evening in the shadow of this place, but William, who wished to push on, would only allow her a quarter of an hour for resting, and so they started again in the heat. Near Helmsley they were vexed to see two little boys panting with weakness as they dragged, with great difficulty, a log of wood which

ought to have been sport to them, had they not been so meagre and underfed. Dorothy was hardly less distressed to see a team of gallant horses weighted beyond their powers, struggling and straining in the heat under an ill-judged load of timber, and forced by their drivers to exert themselves beyond their strength. These sights almost spoiled the day for her.

They reached Helmsley just at dusk, and spent the night at an inn with which they were charmed. The bright yellow walls, the casements overshadowed with jasmine, the low double gavel-ended front, the floors smooth as ice, were all perfect in their unpretending way, and all was delicately fresh.

On the Friday morning they set out to walk to Gallow Hill. Mary and Sara Hutchinson met them almost at the end of their day's tramping, when they were about seven miles from Gallow Hill, which they reached in the early evening.

They spent ten days very pleasantly at the farm. Tom Hutchinson was busy with the hay, but he found time for riding with Sara and Dorothy. They made expeditions to Bedale and Scarborough and Wykeham. The date of Mary's marriage was fixed for October 4th and it was settled that they should go to Grasmere immediately after her marriage. Tom Hutchinson promised that Sara and he would follow as soon as the harvesting was over.

It was tempting to linger at Gallow Hill, but William could not be at peace with himself until the visit to Annette was over. On the 26th, a very rainy Monday morning, Dorothy and he set off in a post-chaise on their journey to France; Mary accompanied them over the Wolds for a short distance. They admired the beauty of Beverley even although they passed through it in a heavy rain, but Dorothy thought the country between Beverley and Hull miserably flat, and found Hull itself, where they spent the night, a frightful, dirty, brickhousy, tradesman-like, rich, vulgar place; but she admired the river with the evening lights on it and the boats moving about. Passing through Barton, Lincoln and Peterborough on their way they reached London on July 29th. Their stay in London was short and not too pleasant. William had business to transact with Richard, in connexion with his visit to Annette

and the settlement of family affairs. The time seemed confused and worried: Dorothy had a feeling of escape as she mounted the coach at Charing Cross before six in the morning, on Saturday July 31st. She was moved by the peace of the city, sleeping in the sunshine. As she crossed Westminster Bridge in the morning air she was impressed by the beauty of St. Paul's, the river and the many boats; the houses, not yet overhung by their cloud of smoke, seemed spread out endlessly. She thought that the sun, shining out over the expanse of roofs, gave the whole scene an amazing comprehensiveness and purity.

On the way to Dover they noticed with interest a white house, almost hidden by trees, which took their fancy, and a parsonage which they decided would just suit Coleridge. They halted at a tempting half-way house where fruit-carts were placed under the shade of the trees, and refreshed themselves. The country being hilly pleased them, and the cottages under the hills, with their little plots of hop-ground like vineyards. Dorothy chatted to her neighbour on the top of the coach, a woman who complained that it was a bad hop year and bemoaned the loss of work: "It is a sad thing for the poor people, for the hop gathering is the woman's harvest; there is employment about the hops for women and children."

They reached Dover at dusk, and embarked straightway. On the Sunday morning at four o'clock they arrived in Calais. They stayed in the vessel till half-past seven; then William went to look for his letters, and they found that Annette and Caroline were "chez Madame Averil dans la Rue de la Tête d'or."

It was with a strange mixture of feelings that William made his way thither. Dorothy was hardly less agitated; shyness and regret made her manner abrupt even to confusion. They found Annette brimming over with feelings no less mingled than their own; Caroline was a sweet lively girl almost ten years old. Her mother, whose eyes often lingered on her in a brooding look in which care and pleasure were mingled, had brought her up in perfect purity and innocence. After the first difficult meeting was over they all

settled into a companionship that had some ease and even happiness in it. Annette realized that the past was dead. She found William much changed. Tall, stern, somewhat shabby and somewhat worn-looking, he was very different from the passionate lonely boy who had been her lover. As she listened to his halting broken French she felt that she could not oppose his marriage to one who was of his own country and his own kind. Nor did she feel bitterness. He had always helped her when he could, denying himself in his poverty so that Caroline and she should suffer as little as possible; and she knew that he would continue to help her as much as he could. As to his changed feelings, life had been too much for him, as for her, quenching their brief flame of passion. That was all. Her tears had been hot, rebellious and bitter, but they were all spent. She had only the dull pang of vain regret now.

She felt a great liking for Dorothy. Caroline was delighted both with her English father and her English aunt.

In their company Dorothy began to enjoy her first visit to France. She had not stayed for any length of time by the sea since the time of the expeditions made in her childhood to Whitehaven, and she found much to delight her. She found light and constant life and joy in the ever-changing waters. She liked to watch the purple reflection of the sky in the waves. The fort at the entrance of the harbour appealed peculiarly to her. When the twilight came on it seemed to be reared upon pillars of ebony that showed between them the colours of the sea. Dorothy thought nothing in romance was ever half so lovely.

Caroline too liked to watch the sea. There was one night, after a very hot day, with the beauty of which she was in raptures. The sky was black, except where it was overspread with lightning, and the sea was very gloomy. Now and again the lightning revealed a distant vessel. The waves which roared and broke against the pier were interfused with greenish light. The little boats rowing out of the harbour seemed to have wings of fire, and the sailing boats left behind them a fiery track.

William loved his daughter for her pleasure in the scene.

August was almost at an end when Dorothy and he decided that they must return. On the last Sunday of the month they said good-bye to Annette and Caroline. The parting was painful. Dorothy felt sure that William was doing the right thing in keeping faith with his feeling for Mary, yet as she looked back on France she felt a curious pang of pity for Annette. She realized that for Annette now life held little but Caroline. It was easy to see that Caroline to her mother was both light and life. William was absorbed in melancholy thought. They knew that the severance which they had chosen to make was all but complete. It had to be, yet their hearts were full of pain.

They landed at Dover at one o'clock on Monday morning. Dorothy, looking up, still half-drenched with sleep, could see the stars among the ropes of the vessel. The harbour air was fresh and keen. Later, the day grew warm, and they bathed and sat on the cliffs until it was time to get the coach. They were in London by the evening.

This time they made a longer stay than they had intended. First Christopher arrived in town, then John, full of life and spirits after his return from India. Richard was already there, so they had a family reunion. The Cooksons were at Windsor. Dorothy longed to see her uncle and cousins, so William and she went to Windsor for a couple of days. In London they stayed at Basil Montagu's rooms, and spent a good deal of time with Charles and Mary Lamb. Charles took them to see Bartholomew Fair. He was in the highest spirits, enjoying the crowds and the roundabouts, the mountebanks and buffoons, the negro with his timbrel and silver collar, the freaks, the ventriloquists and the fire-swallowers, and shouted with laughter when William pronounced the spectacle a hell for eyes and ears. Dorothy, though she looked about her at first with eagerness, found the noise and the jostling, the mingling of the ugly or piteous with the grotesque and the bizarre, the heaped gross humanity, the rude vitality, somewhat exhausting and depressing after a time.

On Wednesday September 22nd they began their return journey to Yorkshire. They arrived at Gallow Hill on Friday the 24th to be eagerly welcomed. Mary met them in the avenue; Sara

and Joanna followed. Tom, standing upon the corn-cart, was forking corn in the sunshine. The garden was gay with asters and sweet peas. All was most pleasant and home-like.

John and George Hutchinson came to Gallow Hill for the wedding on the following Friday. The house was full of bustle and stir. Mary's sisters were busy with wedding preparations. Mary was full of thought for everyone but herself. The time went swiftly by.

Too swiftly—Dorothy thought! She dreaded the coming of October. She feared the strength of the feeling that was gaining upon her. Most of all, she dreaded the wedding morning. All her mind was bent on achieving tranquillity.

Yet the night before the wedding she lay awake, listening to the vague sounds of the darkness, longing for rest, so that when the dawn came she had no strength left with which to meet the day. Spirit and senses were shaken. All the emotion of the past, the present and the future, passionate, sensual and tender, concentrating into the one hour, overwhelmed her. The tumult of feeling brought on a touch of sickness, so that she did not dare to go to the church, but remained in her room, looking with unseeing eyes absently out over the distant wolds at Ganton spire rising out of its nest of trees, and trying to keep as quiet as she could. Yet when she saw Mary's brothers coming up the path to tell her that the marriage service was over, she flung herself on the bed, overmastered in spite of herself by the sharpness of the moment, piercing to the roots of being. Sara, who had been blithe and busy, preparing the breakfast, came running upstairs happy and eager, saying: "They are coming, they are coming," whereupon Dorothy roused herself, went downstairs and out into the garden to meet and embrace William, but speechless and moving like one in a dream. William, seeing that she was dazed and broken, caught her in his arms, and John Hutchinson and he half led, half supported her into the house.

There she stayed to welcome Mary.

After breakfast Mary, William and she started on the homeward journey. The day was one of mingled sunshine and showers.

Mary had been agitated when saying good-bye to her people, but she soon recovered, and the time passed quickly in pleasant talk by the way. They drove on the road by which Dorothy and William had walked to Gallow Hill in July, and Mary had to be shown all that was of interest. At Thirsk they found young and old celebrating the coming of age of Mr. John Bell. There was a huge bonfire in the market-place and the lads were dancing round it, a sight Dorothy loved to see. Every room in the inn was full, so they rode on in the dark to Leeming Lane, which they did not reach till eleven o'clock.

They set out at eight o'clock the next morning in bright sunshine. William always liked to plan a journey so that he could return home by a way which would complete a round, and they now followed the way he had taken when with Dorothy he had walked from Wensleydale to Grasmere in December 1799. Memories of that ecstatic walk melted Dorothy's heart within her. They passed through Leyburn and Wensley, a village most dear. At Hawes they spent a night. At Sedbergh they had the room in which Dorothy remembered so well resting during the evening, weary and happy, two years before, after a wind-blown and strenuous day. Each name had its memory. Garsdale, Kendal, Staveley—all had something to add to the climbing sorrow.

O sweet and cruel and chastening ride, playing on the stops of feeling, making broken music with a human heart, strange baffling music that ceases at the entry into Grasmere on Wednesday evening, the 6th October, 1802—ceases, and is henceforth silent for ever!

BOOK IV
GRASMERE



CHAPTER I

Were I not to go to the mountains very often, I should die.

WILLIAM BECKFORD.

DOROTHY, longing to know what the garden looked like, was too impatient to wait for daylight, so in the evening they went out with candles to see what changes the summer had wrought. They were astonished at the growth of the brooms and the Portuguese laurels. The following day there was much to do. Dorothy and Mary spent most of the time unpacking. On the Friday they walked together on the hillside and in John's Grove and above Rydal. On the 17th they gave a tea-party to thirteen of their neighbours. Everything went on at Dove Cottage much as before, except that now in all she did Dorothy had the companionship of her sister. During the beautiful breathless days of autumn's stately decay, when the birch trees looked like great golden flowers and the mountains in the clear air like stonework thrown up by giant hammers, much of their time was spent by tarn, and waterfall, and between Ambleside and Keswick.

Coleridge was at Keswick until the beginning of November, when he left for Wales. After his departure William turned for a time to study. Dorothy and he worked at Ariosto, although Dorothy, restless in the bright days, would have preferred to be out of doors. The autumn was one of unusual mildness. There were days that were like spring. On the third Sunday of December, walking round the lakes, Mary and Dorothy counted the flowers they saw—strawberry blossoms, yellow turf flowers, a buttercup in the water, daisies, geraniums and one bell of a foxglove.

Coleridge came back to the North in the morning of the day before Christmas, along with Tom Wedgwood. He stopped at the cottage, in passing through Grasmere, and one by one William, Dorothy and Mary turned out to meet him and to tell him of the

birth of his little girl the day before. He was much surprised to hear that there was "a Coleridgiella," as he promptly called his little one, for, somehow or other, having already had three boys, he had never thought of the possibility of having a daughter.

Some days after Christmas Dorothy and William rode over to Keswick to see him. The weather was still so mild that they saw primroses blossoming in a hedge, and these were still blossoming, uninjured by the cold or wet, when Dorothy returned on January 2nd.

Coleridge was restless at Keswick and spent much of his time making plans of travel. He wished very much to go to Italy or Sicily, and tried hard to get William to promise to settle near him, wherever he went. William, although ready enough to enter into these schemes, was quite happy at home, studying and reading, and sometimes adding a little to the *Poem to Coleridge*.

Coleridge went South again in the beginning of 1803 and it was spring before he returned. He brought with him news of Mary Lamb which saddened them all very much. Just before leaving London he had helped to convoy Mary, at the beginning of one of her illnesses, to a private madhouse at Hogsden. He told them she had been quite calm, and had said it was the best thing to do, but two or three times she had wept bitterly, yet all in a quiet way, more piteous than any wildness.

Spring came on with soft sweet rains in which all growing things renewed themselves. Grasmere vale seemed the greenest spot in all the earth, and the softest green covered the mountains even to the very top. Silver How had never seemed so beautiful. Every bit of grass among the varied purple of the rocks was of the softest green. Dorothy was beset with memories of the preceding year. All was so like yet so unlike. The swallows took possession of their last year's nest in the bedroom window; the garden was again splendid with blossoming broom. But now she had many new practical cares. Mary was expecting a baby in June, and all had to be ready for the little girl; somehow Mary and she felt sure

the baby would be a girl. There were all the baby garments to be made, and a new kitchen, rendered necessary by the needs of the growing household, had to be fitted up in a cottage across the road. Dorothy wished all extra household work to be finished in good time. She succeeded in getting the kitchen into order by the second week in June, and then Jenny Hodgson and Molly and she had an enormous washing in it, which was to be the last before Mary's confinement. Poor Molly was much vexed with herself for getting a very sore toe and being a trouble to "Mistress," as she still called Dorothy, in the midst of all this bustle. Dorothy treated her with a medicine borrowed from Mrs. Clarkson, who was famous for her skill in prescribing.

Early in the morning of June 18th Dorothy was rejoicing that Mary's ordeal was safely over and in the birth of a son. The morning was one of peculiar beauty, following a clear starlit night. The birds were singing in the orchard; the swallows in their nest at the bedroom window were twittering; the rose trees were shining with roses, and the mountains were bathed in sunshine. Dorothy, who with Peggy Ashburner had been with Mary all night, felt as if these sights and sounds of morning were a renewal of strength. There was blessing in the sweetness and peace that followed the hours of labour.

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Dorothy was absorbed for a time in the baby, who grew every day more interesting. She had only one regret, that Mrs. Clarkson, who had gone to live with her father at Bury, had left Eusemere without seeing the child. She spent a good deal of time writing letters describing the charms of the baby in such detail that William told her she was guilty of a kind of "secondary egoism." William's first-born son was not beautiful. His nose was too prominent for that. But Dorothy thought his arms, thickening from day to day, dimpled, and with bracelets on the wrists, the bonny fair curls into which the down on his head had been transformed, and his blue eyes that laughed so readily, unbelievably sweet.

They took him out a great deal with them in a little meat basket which they had bought for half a crown, and he would fall asleep in the sunshine beside them as they sat in the top of the orchard. At the end of a month he had already a charming touch of sunburn.

One day they took him out in his basket for a row on Grasmere lake, and he was not the least merry member of a dinner-party on the island.

On July 15th he was christened. He was called John after his sailor uncle, Coleridge and Richard being the godfathers, and Dorothy the godmother. In the afternoon they celebrated the christening. The cake was cut, and everybody was happy. Old Mr. Sympson had as hearty an enjoyment of the cake, tea, and coffee and all the good things put before him as any of the young people.

Already on that day William and Coleridge were talking of a tour in Scotland. William had been longing, ever since his brief visit to Scotland in the September of 1801, to see again the shot-silk finery, as Coleridge called it, of the autumn purple of the hills. Dorothy was looking forward to going with them, yet she grudged losing any of Johnny's sweet babyhood.

At the end of the month William had a letter from an eloquent schoolboy of seventeen, called Thomas De Quincey, who wrote as if the *Lyrical Ballads* had opened for him a new world. They were all greatly pleased, for it was always William's desire that his poetry should reach and interest the young, and this was the second proof they had received that the poems were reaching their fitting audience.

Coleridge too had proofs of the interest his work was exciting. In the beginning of August he entertained at Keswick for a short time Sir George and Lady Beaumont, guests who had been attracted to him by his poetry. Sir George was an artist, but he was hardly less interested in poetry than in painting. Coleridge confided to him many of his hopes, and told him that he had come to Keswick chiefly to be near his friend William Wordsworth, the poet, who lived at Grasmere, and whose work was in many ways the complement of his own. Sir George was much interested in

their friendship and poetic aims, and at the end of his visit he left a couple of fine drawings for Mr. Wordsworth.

When the Beaumonts had gone, Coleridge was still uncertain whether he would join in the expedition to Scotland. As late as August 12th he was doubtful, for he half longed to go to Malta or Madeira, which he could do for the same expense. A day later he made up his mind at last, and Dorothy and William left Grasmere in an Irish car on the afternoon of Sunday the 14th to join him at Keswick.

A few days before he had given them the most astounding news. Sir George Beaumont had purchased a small but beautiful property at Applethwaite, on the southern flank of Skiddaw, and he now offered it to William, because of its nearness to Keswick. William, who on the Friday had gone to see the estate, along with Dorothy and Mrs. Coleridge, felt so overwhelmed every time he looked at the papers connected with this extraordinary gift, that he could not put pen to paper to thank the giver. He set out on his tour with an uneasy conscience, because this letter, which every feeling called upon him to write, was still unwritten.

They left Keswick on Monday August 15th, in blazing sunshine, and after one or two misadventures with the horse—for neither William nor Coleridge was a good driver—they reached Heskett Newmarket, where they spent the night. On the Tuesday they passed through Carlisle, all a-bustle with the assizes: Hatfield, the forger, had just been condemned, and nobody talked of anything but his trial. They stood for a little near the door of the jailer's house, and Dorothy fell into conversation with a debtor. A man who stood near informed William that they might learn from Hatfield's fate "not to meddle with pen and ink."

They passed the night at Longtown and the next day crossed the desolate Solway Moss. Here and there an earth-built hut broke the monotony of the waste. Once or twice they caught sight of a little girl watching a single cow. Something of beauty was added to the desolateness by the endless singing of larks, which accompanied them all the way.

They reached Dumfries late in the evening and found that

everyone had a smile for them and their car. In the morning they chatted for a few minutes with Samuel Rogers and his sister, who were at the same inn, and were just setting out for the Highlands. Then they went into the town and looked about them. Dorothy bought some penny books for Johnny.

She did not like Dumfries very much. There was something too bustling, too consciously prosperous about the town to please her. The chief interest for them all lay in the house and the grave of Burns. They found the house, and looked at it, thinking with sympathy of the poet who had passed his last difficult and unhappy days in it, and the grave, unmarked by any stone and with a child's new grave beside it. They were told that Burns's second son, Francis Wallace, had died, and that Mrs. Burns was in great grief. Dorothy felt a pang for Burns, a keen sense of the suffering and constriction of his life. She pitied him for moving about on such unpoetic ground. On the road to Broomhill they passed Ellisland, his farmhouse. Turning, they could still see the Cumberland hills. Dorothy thought of Skiddaw and of Coleridge's charming children at the foot of it, of quiet Grasmere just behind it and of Johnny in his basket, and the sadness she had felt in thinking of poor Burns, and in hearing of the dangers to which his children were exposed, became mingled with a touch of homesickness and confused fear. They all felt that their pity for Burns had a kind of connexion with their own lives. They fell silent as they passed through the vale of Nith, towards Broomhill, still thinking of him and of the impression of frustration and failure they got from all they saw or heard of him.

On the Friday they went by Thornhill and Wanlockhead to Leadhills. Near Wanlockhead they met three barefooted schoolboys running after one another swift as the wind. One of them carried a fishing rod and they all had honeysuckle in their hats. Dorothy felt that they added an indefinable quality of beauty and sweetness to the place. Presently the lads were joined by some companions. Coleridge spoke to them and found that they learned Greek and Latin, but when he began to question them they took to their heels, as if thinking it a piece of ill-luck to come across a schoolmaster jaunting in a car.

It was on this day that Dorothy began to have the sense of being in a new country. Up to this time she had felt that the country through which she was travelling was different from England, yet not sufficiently different to give a feeling of complete change. Now she felt that she had indeed left home behind. The shape of the hills, the exquisite colour of the heather, the wide treeless spaces, the absence of hedgerows, the nakedness of the stern countryside that made no conscious attempt at ornamentation—all contributed to the feeling; and at Leadhills she noticed and relished the slight differences in speech. She went into a shop to buy thread, and found none that suited her, but the woman of the shop promised to send a "wee lad" to another shop for some. Dorothy liked the phrase. In the course of the evening she said to her landlady: "You have a very cold climate." She was delighted with the reply, given with heavy finality: "Aye, but it is varra halesome."

On Saturday morning they set out after a nice breakfast with honey to it. The air was keen and cold. They meant to reach Lanark before the evening. Much of their travelling, before they joined the main road, was through valleys and glens. Early in the day they came upon a shepherd sitting on the ground reading, and sheltering himself from the wind with his plaid, while near him his flock was browsing. Later in the morning they saw an old man in a Highland bonnet, the first they had seen, walking with the help of a staff at the edge of one of the moorland cornfields, wrapped in a grey plaid and with a dog by his side. Every now and again they came upon flocks of sheep, with shepherd boys tending them. One of these lads made on Dorothy an impression of solemnity and picturesqueness which she found it difficult to understand. He was standing, draped in a grey plaid, on a bare moor, in utter quietness and silence, alone with his sheep. There was something completely satisfying to the imagination in the picture he made. But indeed all these lonely figures affected Dorothy powerfully. They seemed at once stately and humble, lapped in religious quietude, rooted in dignity, living in an almost scriptural simplicity. William felt much the same about them.

He said that Scotland was the most poetical country he had ever seen.

At the end of a long valley as they drew towards Crawfordjohn they came upon a glimpse of a life lived in loneliness, whose effect upon Dorothy was not tranquillizing, but disturbing. Near a decayed cottage at the end of the glen stood what looked like a decayed tree, and the valley, as if sharing in the desolation of the cottage, here degenerated into a level area like a large field, of a dull yellow colour. The encircling hills were exquisitely formed, but they seemed not so much parts of this desolate place as detached witnesses of its desolation. Dorothy felt as if there were something about the place that took hold on her mind. As they drew nearer they saw that a woman, huddled in a grey plaid, was sitting in the middle of the yellowed field. All the time they had her in sight, more than half an hour, she remained motionless. No sheep nor cattle were near, nor was there even a dog to keep her company. There was nothing to account for her presence in the dreary solitude. An air of extraordinary desolation and uncertainty hung about her. Dorothy felt an interest in her that was almost painful.

The road after a time took them nearer the ruined cottage, and they could see that instead of one decayed tree there were eight, all of them blasted or semi-blasted.

When they drew near the village of Crawfordjohn they found the people all out haymaking. Everybody turned and stared at them. Among the workers at the hay was a middle-aged man in a shabby black coat. Dorothy thought from his authoritative manner that he must be the minister of the place. William asked him where he could find a blacksmith, to repair one of the wheels of the car. The black-coated haymaker came over, looked at the wheel and said in a dictatorial way that the damage might be repaired without a blacksmith. Then he brought a hammer and nails, and set William to the work. He gave no assistance, but looked on to see that the mending was properly done, not, Dorothy thought, as if he were disobliging, but as if he thought it more

fitting that he should dictate and William should work. Using many big words, he discoursed on the propriety of every man's giving all the assistance in his power to travellers.

The wheel being mended, they started on their way again.

They dined at Douglas Mill, a large inn, one of the regular stages between Longtown and Glasgow. Here they ordered mutton chops, and while the meal was preparing, Dorothy sat down to write a letter home. She wrote on the window ledge on which William had written to her two years before.

After dinner William and she sat in the garden by a little mill-race. Lazily they watched two of the landlady's children who came out of the door, a boy of about six years old and a little lad in petticoats. The older boy was trying to run away from his little brother. Dorothy was amused at the commotion caused in the house by this truantry. The ostler called out: "Sandy, tak' your wee brither wi' you"; from the window came another voice: "Sawny, dinna leave your wee brither." Last of all came the mother, majestic and handsome: "Alexander, tak' your wee brother by the hand."

Poor Alexander, crushed by the full artillery of his name, obeyed this command, and all was peace.

When they were within a mile of Lanark, William went off by himself to see the Falls of Clyde, while Dorothy and Coleridge pushed on with the weary horse, to find shelter for the night. They put up at the New Inn, and soon they were resting by a cosy fire. Coleridge was not well and stayed indoors all the evening. Dorothy, although tired, was tempted outside by the beauty of the evening sun. The houses were fire-red in the glow, and the faces of people walking westward were lit up as by the light from a forge.

William came back, full of the majesty of the Falls, and the beauty of the evening. He described the Falls, and Coleridge and he sat over the fire discussing the exact meaning of the words "grand," "majestic," and "sublime."

The Sunday morning was as fine as the wonderful sunset of the evening before had promised. Dorothy longed to see the Falls, and

the day was so hot that they all felt it would be pleasant to linger beside water, so they set out immediately after breakfast. In the lanes they met crowds of people going to church. Many of the middle-aged women were in long scarlet cloaks, and without hats. They reminded Dorothy of the women in Goslar, going to church in their gold and silver caps and their long cloaks.

The other side of the river was golden with broom. It delighted Dorothy to see the girls in gay dresses running barefoot among the broom towards the water, through which they waded, and then sitting down on the bank about half a mile from the town, to put on their shoes and cotton stockings.

They stayed some time at the Lower Falls. Dorothy was much impressed by the majesty of the volume of water. Coleridge got into talk with a tourist who remarked that this was a majestic waterfall. He was delighted, for he was just thinking that William had been right the evening before in using the word "majestic" to describe the impression made by the ceaseless strength of the rolling water, and he replied:

"Yes, sir, it is a majestic waterfall."

"Sublime and beautiful," added the tourist.

Coleridge, much dashed, looked at him and could make no reply. He came over to William and Dorothy and told them of his disillusionment, laughing ruefully.

Then they went to see the Upper Falls, which in the daylight were not, William said, nearly as splendid as they had been in the shifting lights of evening.

They returned to the inn to wait for dinner. While they were waiting they watched a party of tourists, whom they had seen at the Falls, drive away from the door, towards Loch Lomond. Dorothy noticed that the pockets of the carriage were stuffed with heather, roots and all, just as if Scotland grew no heather but on the banks of the Clyde.

Dinner consisted of boiled sheep's head, with the hair singed off, and of barley broth in which the head had been boiled. Dorothy and Coleridge made a hearty meal of it. William did not like it so well.

After dinner they set off on foot. They meant to reach Hamilton before the evening, but they were going first of all to walk to the Cartland Craggs, and they had arranged that the car should be driven by a man from the inn, to meet them on the road after they had seen the Craggs.

A guide had been engaged to lead them to the Craggs, one of the oddest-looking men they had ever seen. He was hardly bigger than a child of seven years old, and he paddled along by Dorothy's side, just reaching to her shoulder, almost like a dog, she thought, with his head forward and his long snout pushed before him. Small as he was, he paddled along so quickly on his small pawing feet that Dorothy had some difficulty in keeping up with him. She complimented him on his walking:

"How quick you walk!"

"That was *not* quick walking," he replied decisively.

"Why, what do you call quick walking?" said she.

"Five miles an hour," said he, and told her that his old father could walk twenty-four miles, any day, at the rate of four miles an hour.

Dorothy was much interested.

"Then he has not drunk much strong liquor," said she.

"Yes," said the guide, with a kind of eager pride in his voice, "enough to drown him."

Presently he pointed to the situation of the Cartland Craggs across a narrow valley, but instead of leading the way directly he made a sharp turn down a footpath to the left, saying:

"We must have some conversation here."

Dorothy looked at him in amazement, but like a small animal not to be deterred from his purpose he paddled along until he came opposite a house on the other side of the valley, and then he shouted some words which came back to them with the most distinct echo she had ever heard. He looked at her to see if she was pleased with the surprise he had given her. William and Coleridge then called out the names of friends, and these came back echoed in exactly the tones uttered. But when Dorothy tried, the echo seemed to make fun of her, sending back her voice so shrill and pert in sound that she could not help laughing at it. It was

exactly as if someone had been making her ridiculous by mimicking her.

Then they made their way to the Craggs through the grounds belonging to the gentleman opposite whose house they had been. Dorothy feared that the echo must disturb the owner of the house.

"Oh no!" said the guide, "he glories in much company."

The Craggs proved to be lofty limestone rocks, with trees starting out of them, overhanging the stream at the foot of the rocks, or shooting up towards the sky. Dorothy would have thought the scene very beautiful, were it not that the water, instead of being clear, was a muddy yellow, although here and there in a still place there was beauty in the lazy foam that flecked the muddy surface.

A great deal of wild marjoram grew on the rocks. The guide, who was as nimble as a child, picked a bunch for Dorothy, and said he would come another day to collect a store for himself, enough to provide tea for the winter, and that marjoram tea was "varra halesome."

It was four o'clock when they got to the place where their car was waiting. The driver told them that their little guide had been a shoemaker but had to give up his trade on account of a weakness in his chest; that he made a great deal of money as an errand-goer, but spent it all in drinking.

They travelled through the Trough of the Clyde for the next ten or eleven miles, a little surprised at the contrasts they saw. At times the pears and apples hung over the road; at times the unintercepted broom of uncultivated lands made golden lines like hedges. Crowds of people were coming from the evening kirk, the girls very gaily dressed, often in white gowns, with coloured satin bonnets and coloured handkerchiefs of silk—and usually with their shoes and stockings in a bundle tied under their arm.

It was dusk before Hamilton came into view, and William had some difficulty in driving the tired horse through the town. In the morning they went to see the Duke of Hamilton's picture gallery. William promised them much pleasure from seeing it, and especially from seeing the picture of Daniel in the lions' den, by Rubens. They went up to the front door, as William had done

two years before, when with Sir William Rush's family. A porter, a mean-looking fellow, after scanning them over, told them they had come to the wrong door and, when they had explained the reason of their visit, said they could not be admitted at the moment, but might, if they liked, return in an hour. They asked if they might be permitted to walk in the park, but were informed that this would not be agreeable to the Duke's family, whereupon they returned to the inn somewhat out of spirits. They went a second time to the house, presented themselves at the proper door, and seated themselves on a stone bench to wait, only to be informed after a time by the porter that they could not be admitted. No reason was given.

They returned to the inn and got ready to depart. They had no reason for staying longer in Hamilton, as the inn was dirty and the waiter, lazy and impertinent, grudged giving them any information about the district, or, indeed, speaking to them three words more than he could help.

William was indignant at the treatment he had received at Hamilton House, and swore he would write that very night to Lord Archibald Hamilton.

The day had begun badly for them, and before it ended they were tired and dispirited. As they approached Glasgow they felt the suburbs of the town very long, very ugly and very dirty. The road was noisy with carts and full of people who were inclined to jeer at the car, and the children hooted after them. They were wearied completely before they reached the town and were glad to put up at the first inn they saw, The Saracen's Head. Dorothy had a bad headache and she was very glad to rest for a little in a quiet back parlour.

After dinner William and she went to the Post Office. They found a letter from home which they sat down to read in a quiet timberyard. Then they walked for a time in the streets, but returned to the inn before it was dark. William wrote his letter of complaint to Lord Archibald Hamilton. Dorothy went to bed early, for her head still ached very much.

In the morning they walked to the bleaching-ground, a large

field bordering the Clyde. Dorothy was much interested in seeing women of all ages, young girls and even children, engaged in spreading out their linen and watching it while it bleached. In the middle of the field was a large wash-house, consisting of two very large rooms, with benches set all round for the women's tubs. There were from two to three hundred women busy with their washing. Dorothy thought the bleaching-green must be a cheerful sight on a fine day, but rain came on while she was there and spoiled the scene. The day was cold, so after a look at the shops she returned to the inn, a little ashamed of being so lazy, but feeling as usual that there was little pleasure in walking in a large town.

They set off after dinner at about three o'clock in a dreary shower of rain which compelled them all to ride, to keep their feet dry. Everybody turned to stare at them. Indeed Dorothy had the feeling that they were spreading smiles from one end of Glasgow to the other, but now that she was fresh and rested this did not confuse or distress her as it had done the night before. A group of schoolboys followed them in great delight, longing to jump up, and making several attempts to hang on to the back of the car. They looked so bright and happy that Dorothy wanted to give them a ride, and at a little hill near the end of the town Coleridge and she got out and told the four of the merry band who remained—for some had dropped into their homes by the way—to get in. When the ride was over, the boys scampered away in great glee. Dorothy would willingly have walked much further for the pleasure of making them so happy.

They were to spend the night at Dumbarton. The afternoon was grey and misty, but, once at the top of a hill, they had a magnificent view of the Clyde, winding away mile after mile, dotted with boats and ships, and of Dunglass Castle upon a promontory. The Rock of Dumbarton, five or six miles ahead, terminated the view.

They arrived at Dumbarton before it was dark, but the inn was already full and they were glad to be accommodated even in

a little back parlour, dirty, untidy, smelling of liquor, and overlooking the stableyard. Dorothy rested upon the carriage cushions laid on three chairs while the tea was being prepared. Lying there, in the midst of disorder, suddenly she caught sight of a smoky vessel, resting at anchor, with bare masts, above it a clay hut and the shelving banks of the river, leading to a green pasture. In the evening gloom these things somehow or other had beauty. Dorothy as she looked at them felt as if the sight of them brought peace.

In the morning as soon as breakfast was over they walked towards the castle and the Rock of Dumbarton. As it was low water they were able to walk round the Rock. Dorothy thought she had never seen rock in nobler masses or more proudly set in the very eye of sea storms and land storms, of mountain winds and water winds. The prevailing colour was a rusty yellow, but it was deeply stained by wind and weather. They sat for a time on a large stone at the base of the rock, which seemed to rise perpendicular above their heads. On the brink of the precipice stood a few sheep, two of them being rams with twisted horns. At the same time a sentinel in his red coat, with his firelock over his shoulder, walked to and fro. The sheep seemed to retain their real size, while the sentinel seemed about the size of a toy soldier. The stillness of the sheep, outlined at the top of the noble, yellow-stained, wind-swept heights against a threatening and gloomy sky, made an almost fantastic contrast to the ceaseless motion of the dwarf soldier, at once meaningless and mechanical.

Afterwards they climbed to the top, from which they had three very distinct and noble views, the first up the Clyde, towards Glasgow, the second down the river to the sea, the third showing the way they were to travel—up the Leven to the mountains of Loch Lomond. From the town below, which was full of soldiers, they heard the strains of "Dumbarton's drums beat bonny, O!"

It was about eleven o'clock when they left Dumbarton. They were a little sorry that the day was so blustering and ungenial, as they hoped soon to come in sight of Loch Lomond and wished to see it at its best. For about four miles they travelled on the banks

of the Water of Leven. Then they drew near to Loch Lomond. The road was sometimes quite close to the loch, sometimes at quite a distance from it. Suddenly they came to a place which they thought a Paradise. The road was close to the water; a rocky hill with scattered copses rose above it; trees threw a deep shade over it, and under the trees were three or four thatched huts: the part of the loch near the huts was bounded by the shore of a high wooded island opposite, whose steep banks were purple with heather, and framed a little oblong loch that seemed to belong peculiarly to the cottages. Within this loch, only a narrow river's breadth from the shore, was a little wooded island, so small that it was like a natural garden for the cottages. Dorothy thought: "What a perfect place for William! He might row himself over with twenty strokes of the oars, escaping from the business of the house, and as safe from intruders, with his boat anchored beside him, as if he had locked himself up in the strong tower of a castle."

She was in love with the place.

Boys in kilts were playing in front of the cottages near an old larch which sent out its main stem horizontally across the road. In this place where all was lovely and thriving it was strange to see one tree tortured out of its shape by storm, as if it alone had been predestined to torment and distortion.

The huts were in the Highland fashion. Dorothy, looking at them, suddenly realized how intensely she was enjoying herself. The first week of the tour she had been but half weaned from home. Now the wandering spirit had taken possession of her, and she felt as if new life had entered into her. She was amazed at the amount of pleasure the novelty of things was giving her. A few boys playing in kilts, a few thatched huts, and she felt as if a door had been opened which led into another world.

They were now about two miles from Luss, where they intended to spend the night. In a short time they came to the inn, a nice-looking white house by the roadside. They had to call for some time at the door before anyone came to receive them. At last a barefooted lass came and showed Dorothy upstairs. They had dinner, a poor one, and sour ale, and then Dorothy went to

see the landlady, who was making some difficulty about giving beds for the night. She found a hateful-looking woman, overgrown with fat, steeping in a tub of water dropsical feet and legs that were as thick as millposts. Although there were half a dozen spare beds in the house she could get no promise from this disagreeable creature of shelter for the night.

She decided to trust to luck, and William and she went out to the loch. Coleridge was not well, and remained indoors. In passing through the village Dorothy felt the absence of cultivated flowers. There were wild gardens, overgrowing the roofs of some of the cottages, with flowers and brambles and creeping plants, but there was no garden of man's devising. Dorothy thought how different were the cottages in Somerset, covered with roses and myrtle, the gardens full of honeysuckle.

Here for the first time they saw houses without windows, the smoke coming out of the window-place. A hole in the roof served for the chimney, and over it was placed a slate upon four sticks, often very precarious-looking.

They walked towards the head of the loch. Looking back they saw the islands at the lower end of the water, in great beauty. The large island they had seen in the morning towered above the rest. They had found out that its name was Inchtavannach.

They sat for some time in the shelter of a bark hut by the edge of the water. While they were resting, a travelling beggar, wandering along the side of the loch, with a little girl by her side, begged a penny from Dorothy. She had never been in the district before, and she asked Dorothy where she could "find quarters in the village." She looked tired and melancholy, and Dorothy pitied her very much, struggling with fatigue and poverty and unknown ways.

When they got back to the inn, they ordered tea. No further objection was made to their passing the night in the house. Dorothy asked the girl to light a fire, and received the reply: "I dinna ken whether she'll gie fire." Presently the tea-things were brought in, but the girl reported that her mistress "was not varra willing to gie fire." However, they insisted; the fire was made; they had tea by candlelight, and spent a pleasant evening although the night grew

very stormy and wet and every window in the house was shaking in its frame.

The morning was fine, the sky a bright blue although flecked with quick-moving clouds, the play of light and shade vivid and distinct. They decided to go on the water, and William engaged a man to row them to Inchtavannach. They landed on the side of the island opposite the cottages which had charmed them the day before, and proceeded to climb. They had not gone far before they looked back, and beheld a view so beautiful that it held them spellbound. Dorothy thought it so singular and beautiful that it was like a flash of images cast from some other world upon this one. They looked towards the foot of the lake and saw it scattered over with islands without beginning and without end, of every kind of shape and surface, some bare, some hilly, some pastoral, some covered with wood, one with the deer moving upon it. The day had darkened, but there were bursts of sunshine and the distant hills were visible, some through stormy mists, others in gloom that had patches of sunshine. The loch was lost under the distant hills and the islands were lost in the water, which was all in motion with the shadows of the heavy clouds or with travelling fields of light. There was something of infinity about the sight. When they had walked a little further they could see Dumbarton Rock in the distance with its double head. A mist which hung over it gave it a visionary appearance. Dorothy compared it to the Tor of Glastonbury seen from the Dorsetshire hills. Near them was a large flat island, bare and green, and so low that it seemed hardly to rise above the water. On it were several small trees or shrubs, growing close to the shore, but some chance effect of light and shade seemed to detach them from the land, and they had the appearance of little vessels sailing along the coast of the island. Dorothy thought these tiny trees, that looked as if they were sailing, extraordinarily in keeping with the character of the scene, which seemed to have in it something magical and enchanting. It was a new world to her in its outline and form, and the newness was reinforced by the changes that took place in its elements every moment from the effect of sun and wind and light and shadow.

Intricate as were the component parts of the scene, there was no sense of restlessness or lack of unity but rather something that called the heart to peace. Dorothy felt that all the little lakes among the islands might well make one forget that the great water was near, and yet they were the more beautiful because they were all parts of a beautiful whole.

She would gladly have set foot on every one of the islands that were near. The flat green island had upon it a solitary hut. They persuaded the boatman to row to it, and found on it several woodmen's huts, built in the form of a cone from the ground, the door being just large enough for a stooping man to enter. Straw beds were raised on tops of logs; tools were lying about; a forked bough was usually hung from the middle of the roof to support a kettle. Dorothy could not help thinking of the lines:

And then he said "how sweet it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
A gardener in the shade,
Still wandering with an easy mind
To build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!

The main lake was stormy when they left the shelter of the islands. Dorothy longed to visit another island, very tiny, covered with trees, and having on it a small ruin, overgrown with ivy, almost more like a tuft of trees in the shape of a ruin than a ruin hidden by trees. But now the boatmen were impatient to be home, because of the threatening storm. They told Dorothy the ruin had been built as a stronghold by a man who lived there alone, and who used to swim over to the shore for plunder, who was such a fine swimmer that nobody could ever catch up with him, but who was at last caught in a net.

Dorothy was much interested in the curious story, told in the Highlanders' grave slow English.

They made such good speed back to Luss that they were at the inn by twelve o'clock, and able to set out for Tarbet with the better part of the day before them. The road between Luss and

Tarbet was a solitude. For a long time the loch could be seen pushing itself up through an avenue of mountains. There was a grand obscurity over everything.

Tarbet lay in a deep bay under the shelter of a hill. The inn was a white house, well sized and pleasant-looking from the outside, but inside it smelt strongly of herrings, which were hung out to dry over the kitchen fire. When Dorothy asked if they could have dinner and accommodation for the night, the people of the inn stared, without giving an answer at once, in a disconcerting way, but soon she realized that they were silent not out of rudeness, but because it took them a little time to understand, as Gaelic was the language of the family, and presently she was conducted upstairs into a pleasant square sitting-room, with one of the windows looking toward the mountains, and the other across the loch, to Ben Lomond. The dinner consisted of eggs and salt meat, served without any potatoes.

They meant, on the morrow, to make their way to the Trossachs, and so they asked the landlord which was the best way to go, but he knew little about the place although it was only ten miles off. Then Dorothy questioned the maid who waited on them, a handsome girl dressed in a white bed-gown, without shoes or stockings, yet with a comb fastening up her hair. When Dorothy asked about the Trossachs, the girl said she knew nothing of them, but when Dorothy said: "Do you know Loch Ketterine?" she smiled and said: "I *should* know that loch, for I was bred and born there." She told them that the Trossachs were at the foot of that loch and that they would have to walk for about ten miles to get to the loch itself, that the roads were bad, and that there was "no putting-up" for visitors. In spite of this discouragement they decided to go, and Dorothy asked the landlady to roast them a couple of fowls to take with them.

In the morning they set out between ten and eleven o'clock. They were told they could find a boatman in a white house which they could see from the inn windows. It looked pretty from outside, but the inside shocked them with its filth. Dorothy said it was like the house of a decayed weaver in the suburbs of a large town. William was severer. He said it was quite Hottentotish.

After long waiting they found themselves seated in the boat. The only other passenger was a little Highland woman who was also crossing to the other side. They had hardly started when it was evident that, if any of the party made the least movement, the boat, which was very leaky, would be full of water in an instant. The little woman kept baling the water continually. Dorothy was frightened, but the boatman explained that this crazy vessel was not his own, and that he was only using it to take them to his own, which was in a little bay not far distant. They reached the larger boat in safety, but just as they were landing, William dropped the bundle of provisions into the water. Although the fowls seemed none the worse, the sugar, coffee and pepper-cake seemed to be entirely spoiled.

They got into the other boat and were soon rowed to the ferry of Inversnaid, on the opposite side. The boatman's helper, a youth fresh from the Isle of Skye, who could not speak a word of English, sang all the time in a low voice a plaintive Gaelic song, curiously sweet, to the rhythm of his oars.

The little Highland woman accompanied them for two miles of their journey across the moors to Loch Katrine. She could speak hardly a word of English, and sometimes there was the quaintest confusion in her speech. Once when they passed a small loch on the moors, Dorothy asked if they lived much upon fish in those regions. She received the reply:

"Ah yes! eat fish—no papists, eat everything."

At first their road led up a hill, then over a moor. They were surprised to see on this moor a very large stone building, with a high wall round it. This bleak-looking building added an unusual look of wildness and desolation to the place. The Highland woman tried to explain what it was, but all they could understand from her explanation was that it was a "large house," which was already plain enough.

After this they walked for some time over the moor without seeing any dwelling but a hut by a burnside with a peat-stack beside it. Then they came to some clusters of houses. By one of these clusters was some cultivated ground, and the people, both men and women, were busy haymaking. It was a sunny day, and linen

lay bleaching by the streams; dogs ran about among the sunny hills and rocks, barking at the sight of strangers. They passed by one patch of potatoes in flower. It seemed to Dorothy that a bed of carnations could not have looked gayer on the bare moor than the flowers of the potatoes, which were of extraordinary size, and whose gay colours, of every conceivable shade, from snow-white to deepest purple, had an effect of almost exotic luxuriance.

At one of these clusters of houses the pleasant little Highland woman left them.

They pursued the road, which had now become a mountain horse-track, until they came to what seemed the head of the loch, and then, completely wearied by their long walk in the hottest part of the day, and not quite knowing whether to go on or to go back, they sat down to rest. The track stopped at the water. Dorothy untied the provisions and they ate one of the fowls and drank some of the water of the loch. Then William got up to explore the moor at the head of the loch. After a time Dorothy followed him, and Coleridge followed her. They walked with some difficulty through the luxuriant heather, and found William, half a mile ahead of them, resting on a hill, from which they could see the real head of the loch, a considerable way beyond the place where they now sat. On the opposite side was a neat white house, but to get to it they would have to go round the head of the loch, which seemed to them a very long way.

While they were wondering what to do, they saw a man in Highland dress riding towards them, with a boy running after him on foot. They would have been glad to see anyone, man, woman or child, at the moment, but the man they saw had something so interesting in his appearance that he would have arrested their attention at any time. In his bonnet and plaid, he looked extraordinarily gallant and graceful as he sat his horse. Dorothy felt her fatigue drop off her as she looked at him, and forgot everything except the pleasure of being in the Highlands. William addressed him with: "Sir, do you speak English?" He replied: "A little," and answered their questions with a quiet courtesy, in English that was very slow and distinct. He told them that in addition to the white house which they saw in the distance there

was Glen Gyle House at the near end of the loch, hidden from them by part of the hill on which they stood, and that the master of the house, who kept a boat, might possibly spare one of his servants to go with them; that he himself was going beyond the Trossachs to Callander. Having told them this, he rode on in the horse-track in the heather.

After he had gone they were again irresolute. They were not especially charmed by the loch. Dorothy thought it rather like a barren Ullswater. She said the Highlander, on his naked heath, in his Highland dress, upon his horse, with the boy running after him, was worth it all. But having come so far they felt ashamed to go back, and started to follow the horse-track. Soon they came in sight of the house which had been hidden from them, but the way was so rough that it was between five and six o'clock before they reached the field in which the house stood.

About half a dozen people were at work in the field. William spoke to one of them, who seemed like the master, and all drew near to him, staring as if he were an oddity. When he said that they had come to see the Trossachs, everybody smiled. William felt he had to justify his expedition, so he told them the Trossachs were much celebrated in England.

After a little talk the gentleman offered him hospitality for the night. William was very glad to accept this, and went back, much relieved, to tell Dorothy and Coleridge of the invitation. The men now stood at the door to receive their guests, and the gentleman who had just ridden across the moor conducted the strangers into the house. His name was McAlpin, and he was the father of the mistress of the house. He showed them into a large square room upstairs, wainscoted in deal, which was black with age, and begged them to make themselves at home. After some time Mrs. Macfarlane, the mistress of the house, entered, tall and fine-looking, dressed in a dark-coloured gown, and with a white handkerchief round her head. Her manner was at once gracious and shy. Dorothy was encouraged by its sweetness to ask permission to go down to the kitchen fire to dry her feet. She was surprised at the kitchen. Roof, walls and floor of mud—all were alike black.

With their tea they had cheese, delicious butter, and barley-

cakes. After tea William and Dorothy went out and watched the Highlanders at work. It amused them to see the leisurely companionable way these people had in all they did. When anything was to be done, all followed in a train, either to take part in the work or to look on, old men, young men and little children. Dorothy thought they took their work like play, and never knew what it was to work till they felt fatigue.

She tried to make friends with the children, who were running about, and who were at first very shy, for they could not speak a word of English, but presently the eldest girl, to whom she had given a purse of red leather, took hold of her hand and hung about her with pretty smiles. The mother lamented that they were so far from school, and that the children would have to be sent into the Lowlands to learn English.

In the evening the family sat round a blazing fire in the kitchen, father-in-law and son-in-law, master and man and the lady with her child upon her knee. When Dorothy went to bed, Mrs. Macfarlane accompanied her to her room and hoped she would sleep well on blankets which were "fresh from the fauld." Long afterwards Dorothy heard the talk and laughter of the group round the kitchen fire.

She was still beneath her blankets when Mrs. Macfarlane came into her room in the morning to ask whether she would have a basin of whey, adding: "We make very good whey in this country." The servant brought the whey, and Dorothy thought it the best she had ever tasted. They breakfasted with the family, having, as on the night before, tea and barley-cakes and cheese and butter, along with fresh oat-cakes, which were kneaded with cream, and were excellent. The family, it seemed to Dorothy, ate as much butter as bread. The conversation was about the changing conditions of the Highlands. All spoke with much indignation of the oppression endured by the Highlanders further North, of the impossibility of their living in comfort, and of the depopulation.

Dorothy mentioned Rob Roy, and the eyes of all glistened. Mrs. Macfarlane exclaimed: "He was a good man, Rob Roy." She told them that he had lived in the next farm to their own, that he was a famous swordsman, partly owing to the extraordinary

length of his arms, which were so long that he could garter his tartan stockings below the knee without stooping. He had imprisoned the factor of the Duke of Montrose in one of the islands of Loch Katrine, after having taken all his money from him, in open day. He had never robbed the poor, but only the rich. Dorothy saw that these people had enough stories about Rob Roy to fill all the evenings of a December week.

When breakfast was over, Mrs. Macfarlane asked her husband to "return thanks," and in a few minutes all went to work, following one another like a flock of sheep. Mrs. Macfarlane took Dorothy to have a look at the burying-place of the lairds of Glen Gyle, a square enclosure, like a pinfold, placed among trees. When they returned to the house she brought out some curious feathers, some of which she presented to Dorothy. When asked what bird they came from, she replied: "Ah, it is a great beast."

Dorothy was delighted with the gift and the gracious giver.

At about ten o'clock they said good-bye to their kind hostess. They were to walk for three miles to the hut of a man who kept a ferry boat, and if the man were at home they hoped he would row them down the loch to the Trossachs.

Their walk was mostly through coppice woods along a narrow cart-track. They passed the white house they had seen from a distance the day before, and near it they saw a pinfold square like the one Dorothy had seen in the morning, so that they knew it to be a burying-place. This one was in a sloping green field among woods and within the sound of the beating of the water against the edge of the loch. Dorothy thought to herself that, if she lived in the white house, and her ancestors and kindred were buried so near, in such a sweet and peaceful spot, she would sit many times under the walls of the enclosure, not with a feeling of bereavement but with a feeling of communion, as if she were in a place where all the family would one day be gathered together, and whose very dust was dear.

They found the ferryman at work in a field above his hut, but very ready to give up his work to go with them. The morning being cold and wet, they asked if they might sit by the fire for a little before starting. Permission was readily given, and they

viewed with interest the inside of a Highland hut. They entered by the cowhouse; the house door was at right angles to the other door. The hut consisted of the cowhouse, of the kitchen which led off from it, and of the spence at the other end. The walls were of unplastered stone, and the rooms were divided, not up to the rigging but only to the beginning of the roof, so that warmth, light and smoke passed freely from one end of the house to the other. When they entered the kitchen, the ferryman's wife was distressed that she had a bad fire, but she heaped on peats and heather, and blew on it with her breath, so that soon there was a fine blaze, accompanied also by a good deal of smoke, more of which found its way out through the open window-frames than through the chimney. Although quite unprepared for visitors, she was very kind. When Dorothy asked for anything, she replied delightedly: "Ho! yes, ye'll get that," and went through to her cupboard in the spence. They dined on porridge, bread and butter, and milk, before departing for the Trossachs.

Coleridge was afraid of the cold, and preferred to walk. Dorothy and William got in with the ferryman. For the first three or four miles there was nothing interesting to see. It began to rain heavily, whereupon William wrapped himself in the boatman's plaid and lay at the bottom of the boat. He dozed until, just as they had turned round a point and Dorothy had noticed that the scenery was changing, he wakened and, rubbing his eyes, said he hoped she had not let him sleep while they were passing anything so beautiful. Dorothy told him they had just come to the interesting part. The ferryman was delighted with their pleasure, and often, after he had turned a point, would say: "This is a bonny part."

Their pleasure increased as they got towards the end of the loch and could see the river issuing out of it through a narrow chasm among the hills. They were now enclosed by hills. All that she beheld now seemed to Dorothy the perfection of loveliness and beauty, in entire solitude. Many of the solitary places she had seen since coming to Scotland had a suggestion of desolation. Here there was no such feeling. Nothing was to be seen but water,

woods, rocks, heather and bare mountains, yet all was entirely satisfying to the heart.

Just as they came in sight of two huts which had been built by Lady Perth as a shelter for visitors to the Trossachs, Coleridge hailed them, as he stood in the doorway of one of the huts, glorying in the beauty of Scotland. They landed and walked to the hut. From the doorway they could see Ben Venue opposite, its top concealed by clouds, its sides covered with birch trees and seamed with torrents; all was perfect silence: not even the sound of water was heard. The whole appeal was to the eye. But again Dorothy felt that the place entirely satisfied the sense and the heart. Everywhere were rocks, knolls and hills of heather, so tall that a child of ten years would almost be buried in it, and exquisite in colour. Dorothy feared that she would never be able to find words to express the sense of perfection which the scene gave her.

Afterwards they walked until they came within sight of Loch Achray.

As they returned to the boat the ferryman pulled a leafy twig from a birch tree and gave it to Dorothy, telling her that it was "sweet and halesome." Dorothy suddenly saw what was meant by the phrase "pu'ing the birks" in Scottish songs. The ferryman told her how pleasant it was on a summer morning to sail under the banks where birks were growing. He was much pleased with Dorothy's admiration of his loch, and told her several times that it was "bonnier than Loch Lomond."

Coleridge again preferred the road to the boat, and set out to walk back to the ferryman's cottage. William invited a tourist whom they met at the huts to take the empty place in the boat. The return journey was indeed very cold. The ferryman had lamented when they were at the Trossachs that the day was not brighter, but Dorothy had been glad of the beauty of the mists floating on the hillsides. Now, however, she felt the cold penetrating her; rain came on so heavily that they all got completely wet and she was sick with cold when they reached the hut.

But all was so warm and cosy that she quickly recovered. There was a fine fire and, when she sat down in the smoky chimney-

corner, she felt that she had never been more comfortable in her life. Mrs. McGregor, the ferryman's wife, took their wet clothes and, bringing out a whisky bottle, offered each of them "a dram" to keep them from catching cold. Indeed both the master and mistress of the house could not do enough for them. The ferryman, although wet and cold, would not draw near the fire until they were dry and comfortable. Coleridge, who had been the first to reach the hut, had prepared a pan of coffee. They asked for sugar, butter, barley-bread and milk, each of which the mistress brought after a soft stare as if of wonder, and giving the glad reply: "Ye'll get that."

They caroused their cups of coffee, laughing like children; the gusty smoke poured round them and spread like clouds above their heads in the chimney, where the hens were already roosting. Dorothy felt full to the brim of happiness. They laughed again and again in their delight at the pleasantness and strangeness of this ending to their adventure. Dorothy forgot her quarrel with unscrubbed Scottish kitchens and thought the beams and rafters, gleaming between the clouds of smoke and shining where the fire-light fell on them, were as glossy as black rocks on a summer day, cased in ice. When she made a move to go to bed, the mistress, inviting her to "go ben," accompanied her into the spence with a candle, assuring her the bed was dry. There were two other beds in the room, as well as a cupboard and two chests, on one of which stood the milk in wooden vessels covered over.

William and Coleridge and the tourist they had met at the Trossachs were to sleep in the barn on dry hay.

Dorothy lay awake for a long time before she slept. She watched the roof as the flickering of the kitchen fire played among the varnished rafters and beams, and thought it looked much as the roof of an underground cave might have looked if the moonlight were playing on it. Yet the colours reminded her more of molten gems. At length the light of the fire faded; the man and his wife and child crept into their bed at the other end of the room, and all was quiet, except for the sound of the water. Dorothy could hear the waves breaking on the shore, the trickle of a little burn near the hut, and all night long the soft pattering of the rain.

When she sat up in bed and looked through the open window-place she could see the gleaming loch. Even the Trossachs seemed less magical than the quiet hut in its fading colours.

She thought of the Fairy-land of Spenser.

The next morning was Sunday, the last Sunday of August. They were beginning the third week of their tour. Dorothy wakened with an extraordinary sense of peace. She could hear Mrs. McGregor milking in the byre behind the chimney and, as she listened to the milk purring into the pail, she thought she had never heard a sweeter fireside sound. She felt that she had strayed into the true pastoral world, a world in which the cow was meat, drink and company.

The family breakfasted on curds and whey, taken out of the pot in which the cheese was made, and Dorothy thought it exceedingly good. Mrs. McGregor also boiled some water for them in an iron pan, and provided tea and sugar which she said she always kept for the visitors.

She shook Dorothy cordially by the hand when they left after breakfast, and gave her a warm invitation to come again. Then they all got into the boat, and the ferryman rowed them to the point from which they had started exploring the loch, after which they walked back over the moors to Inversnaid. The country now looked very desolate in the streaming rain. The Garrison House, as they had learned the big building on the moor was called, had something even repellent about it.

As they drew near the ferryhouse at Inversnaid they met two girls who told them that they could not cross the ferry until the evening, as the boat had gone across the water, with a load of churchgoers. The girls were clad in grey plaids falling to their feet; one of them had a beautiful face—Coleridge said she was lovely as a vision—and the voices of both were so sweet and their slow English was so clear, that Dorothy felt charmed by them as they stood, their faces flushed by the rain, answering her questions. The beautiful girl was the sister of the ferryman, the other was the sister-in-law. They invited Dorothy and her companions to come into the house and sit by the fire. The hut was after the Highland

fashion, with open window-spaces like the hut at Loch Katrine. A waterfall at one end made a continual rushing noise, giving Dorothy a restless feeling that she was hearing the beating of the waves on the loch all the time. There was a bed in one corner of the kitchen, and in another an old woman, the mother of the ferryman's wife, sat hushing a baby to sleep with sad Gaelic songs. The floor was rough and wet with the rain coming in at the door, and the bare feet of the girls were as wet as if they had been walking through street puddles, as they passed from one room to the other. Dorothy was more and more charmed by the grace of the elder girl, whose loveliness and vivacity were chastened very delicately by the hesitation caused by her difficulty in understanding English. Both the girls could not do enough to make their visitors comfortable. They put on a chicken to stew in barley broth for dinner; they turned out the mistress's wardrobe on the parlour floor, chattering to each other in Gaelic and laughing all the time; and finally they chose a gown of a light-coloured sprigged cotton, with a blue linsey petticoat, which they offered to Dorothy, inviting her to take off her wet clothes and helping her into her new garments, saying again and again: "You never had the like of that before." Stockings were a problem. The girls hesitated very much before offering Dorothy a coarse woollen pair, saying again: "You never had the like of them before."

Then they dished up the dinner with a good deal of bustle but with the same peculiar grace on the part of the elder girl. Dorothy asked them if the church was far off. They said: "Not very far; perhaps about four or five miles." She said that was a long way to go to church, but they told her people in that district thought nothing of going nine or ten miles to a preaching, that sometimes the people from the two lochs would have a service in winter in the Garrison House, and on the hillside or under the rocks in the summer. As they talked, Dorothy realized that these services, drawing the people on horseback and in boats across the water, were like landing-places in the memory, leaving each of them a distinct impression on the lives of those who travelled to attend them.

Every now and again the girls looked out across the water, and

presently they said that the boat was coming back. Dorothy went to the side of the loch, and saw a number of people on the opposite side, who looked to her like a group of soldiers in red and green surrounding a carriage. As the boat drew near she could see that there were about twenty people in it, the men in tartan plaids, the women in scarlet cloaks and green umbrellas. She thought the landing a very pretty sight. The women held up their umbrellas; the men in their plaids and bonnets had something very vivid about their appearance; the young men and lasses talked and laughed; the joyous bustle seemed to communicate itself even to the waterfall and the restless grey waves.

The ferryman was impatient to be gone as he had a second load of passengers waiting for him on the other side; his wife had just time to say to Dorothy she hoped the girls had looked after them well, before the boat started. It was still raining when they got to the other side, and the twilight was stealing on, but Dorothy could not resist watching the embarking of the second lively boat-load, before she started on the three-mile walk to Tarbet.

The mountains on the way were not concealed by the twilight or by the misty weather, but they seemed even larger and grander in the obscurity than they had seemed in the daylight. All around, torrents were sounding in the gloom. As the darkness closed in gradually upon the huge avenue of hills it seemed to Dorothy as if sky, water and mountains were mingled together. All was solitary and vast. Suddenly, there came a half-inarticulate hooting from a field near. Dorothy, who was then at a point on the road which led over the brow of a hill, stopped at the cry. She saw a little boy on the hill, between her and the lake, wrapped in a grey plaid, and seemingly calling home the cattle for the night. The appearance of the child in that wild and solitary place, the touch of strangeness in his look and cry, had in it something that moved her exceedingly. It was as if all that made the Highlander what he was had revealed itself in the child's inarticulate cry on the lonely hillside.

When they got to Tarbet the people of the inn were eager to hear about the expedition. The girl who waited at the inn evi-

dently enjoyed hearing about Loch Katrine. Now for the first time she ventured to say that it was "bonnier to her fancy than Loch Lomond."

After supper they talked over their plans for the week. Coleridge thought gloomily that the rainy season had set in. He had not been too happy during the two weeks they had been upon the road. His sleep had been broken by the most distressing dreams, and this made him tired and depressed in the daytime. Also he was a trifle vexed with William, who seemed to him very silent, and either self-centred or absorbed in Dorothy's conversation. He seemed so unhappy at the thought of continuing the journey in an open carriage that William asked him if he would like to make his way back to Loch Katrine and from Loch Katrine to Stirling, where he could get the Edinburgh coach. Dorothy did not like the idea of his wandering from place to place and told William that the thought of it distressed her. Coleridge sat moodily listening to them arguing.

In the morning the rain was still heavy, and he made up his mind to return. Dorothy and William decided to continue their tour, although they fully believed that the weather had broken and the next few weeks would be rainy. Determined not to be kept back by the weather, they got ready after breakfast to push on to Arrochar. Coleridge went with them and had lunch with them at Arrochar. He accompanied them for a little on the way to Cairndow before he turned back to Tarbet. He took from their common purse six guineas, which he thought would be amply sufficient to see him home. Dorothy and William had the remaining twenty-nine guineas, as they expected to be wandering for another month.

Their road for a time lay between mountains on the right and the shores of Loch Long on the left, scattered with seaweed and broken seashells. Soon they entered Glen Croe and travelled along a road that seemed to have insinuated itself into the very heart of the mountains. On the right The Cobbler towered above the other hills. The glen was very lonely. Nothing was to be seen but the road, bare hills, floating mists, and herds of black cattle on the

mountains. Dorothy had been depressed since Coleridge had left them. This depression increased as they followed the narrow windings of the road through the glen. She felt sick at heart as she thought of him, in poor health and spirits, making his way alone from place to place. He had left on her mind an impression of trouble.

3

As they passed from reach to reach of the glen the afternoon cleared up, and the evening was fine. The rain-washed sky after the storm of the morning was extraordinarily vivid and beautiful. Brilliant yellow clouds running over it shed a light like bright moonlight upon the mountains. When they reached Glen Kinglas, the Western sky was a glorious mass of clouds. As they passed by a mountain loch, they saw its crimson lights reflected in the waters, deep red, like melted rubies.

Yet there was something melancholy in this gorgeous beauty. Night was already coming upon the hills. The rest of the journey through the glen was like a dream. Dorothy only knew that the road was bad, that the steepes were high, and that all along the way they had the company of a foaming stream. As they got out of the close glen the moon appeared in the sky, and they saw that they were near Cairndow and that the waters of Loch Fyne lay before them.

The next morning they set out at nine o'clock, after breakfasting on delicious herrings fresh out of the water. They meant to reach Inveraray before night. The road took them round the head of the loch and along the western shore of Loch Fyne. Dorothy noticed at one place a cluster of fishing boats at anchor in a small bay by the roadside, and overshadowed by the fishermen's nets hanging out to dry and falling in the most exquisitely graceful folds. She thought the little company of vessels, still and silent in their sheltered nook, had something curiously interesting and beautiful about it.

Inveraray looked very pretty as they drew near to it, with its line of white buildings close to the water's edge. What interested them both about it was the way in which the castle had imposed

itself upon the town. There seemed to be a natural festivity in the scene. Even the mountains and the loch shared in this effect. The hills seemed the shield and enclosure of the ducal domain, the water the highway for the bearing of tribute. When Dorothy looked out of the window of her high room at night, and looked out upon the castle, the tower, the rocky steeps of Duniquoich hill, and the loch with many boats upon it, all flooded with bright moonlight, again she had the feeling that Nature had prepared the place for princely festivities. The picture would have been complete if there had been a bevy of gay Scottish ladies, sailing in the moonlight, with music, in a brightly decorated barge.

In the morning they were chafing with impatience before they left the inn, and vexed with the slowness of the service, for they had a long day's journey before them, to Dalmally. Their road was up the valley behind the castle, until they came in sight of Loch Awe, with Ben Cruachan towering opposite. They stopped to rest at a beautiful little village called Cladich and had some porridge at one of the cottages. They thought they would like to row to one of the islands on Loch Awe and, when they were told that there was a ferryman on one of the islands who would come across to them if they signalled him with a fire, they went to the top of a hill with a man who set some children to collect sticks and withered leaves that would make a fine smoky flare. The children amused Dorothy very much. Having collected the fuel for the fire, they began to play like little animals, wrestling, rolling down the green hill, pushing one another over and over again, standing upon one another with their bare feet on the body, breast or any other part, sometimes rolling all together in a tangled heap, laughing, screaming and chattering in Gaelic, quite heedless in their glee of those watching them. Immediately from the water's edge on the other side of the loch, Ben Cruachan rose, woody near the water and craggy above. Dorothy thought it the grandest mountain she had ever seen, and remarked to their guide that it was a fine mountain.

"Yes," replied he slowly, "it is an excellent mountain."

Their afternoon travelling by the side of the water was very

pleasant. As they drew near the end of the loch Dorothy was enchanted by the sight of Kilchurn Castle, like a decayed palace arising out of a plain of waters.

A little before sunset they reached Dalmally. They were called in the morning at six o'clock, and set off after having a bowl of bread and milk. Early as the hour was, Dorothy saw a sight which it always pained her to see, women from the cottages on the hillside each creeping after a single cow feeding on the slips of green between the patches of corn. They travelled at the foot of Cruachan until they came to the Pass of Awe. Then they were between steep hills, for a long line of naked precipices rose directly out of the water to their left. The pass was very solitary. After they had gone for some time without meeting man or beast they started at the sight of a single vessel rounding the point of the hill and coming into the valley where they were—floating in the middle of the water with one large sail spread out and swollen by the breeze. Dorothy felt that the loch and the mountains instantly took on more beauty as the vessel held on her stately solitary course. There was one man on board, who sat at the helm, and whose appearance made the boat have more of the character of solitude than if it had been deserted.

A little further on they came to the end of Loch Awe and the beginning of the river flowing towards Loch Etive. Crossing a bridge and climbing a hill they saw before them the village of Taynuilt. Dorothy was very glad to see it, for she was not well and the cold had given her a headache. They found at the inn a kindly landlady who lit a good fire for them and set out a nice breakfast of eggs, preserved gooseberries and cream, cheese and butter, and oat-cakes, which were so hard, however, that Dorothy could not chew them. They engaged rooms for the night, ordered a fowl for supper, and then went out, although it was raining heavily, to explore Loch Etive. They succeeded in getting a boatman from a cottage near the place where the river Awe flows into Loch Etive, and went upon the water for the day.

On their right was Cruachan, on their left a steep and craggy mountain named Ben Duirinish. They crossed the loch, which was very rough in the middle, but calmer near the sides. There

were pools among the rocks, still as a mirror, and beautiful with the reflection of the orange-coloured seaweed growing among the rocks. The tops of the mountains were covered with mists, but they could see the sheep pasturing on the mountainsides and hear the roaring of the torrents and the cries of many land birds and sea birds. The wildness of the place sank into their hearts.

They happened to say that they were going to Glen Coe, where-upon the boatman said the head of the loch was within an hour's walk of Glen Coe. Dorothy longed to attempt this expedition, instead of going round by road and ferry, but the boatman could give no clear directions as to the way. William and he went to a thatched house at the foot of Ben Duirinish to see if they could get any directions. Dorothy remained in the boat, wrapped in her cloak. As she looked at the cottage, she felt that she had never seen a retirement that would have satisfied her so completely if she had wanted to be at the same time shut out from the world and in the midst of the grandest works of God. On one side of the cottage was a little woody glen; Cruachan towered on the opposite side of the loch, with mists floating high and low on the sides of it, and concealing the top. The boat belonging to the cottage lay at anchor chained to a rock which, like the border of the lake, was edged with tawny seaweed, and some fishing nets were hung out upon poles. The sight of these led Dorothy's thoughts out to the wide ocean, yet made the immediate solitude of the mountains bear an impression of safety and seclusion all the deeper.

William came back without having got any clear information, nor could they get any clear directions at other houses. The mist was thickening so that they could hardly see the other side of the loch, when suddenly they heard a crashing through the bushes at the water's edge and saw emerging a ragged lame fellow, with a fishing rod over his shoulders, pushing along at a great rate at the foot of Ben Duirinish, making such speed through the bushes and heather that it seemed as if he got along the faster for his lame leg, and followed by another man and three women.

"There's one that can tell us about the road to Glen Coe, for he was born there," cried the boatman, and hailed the ragged

company. The lame leader and he shouted to each other in a torrent of Gaelic. The rapid interchange of words sounded almost savage to Dorothy, who had got used to the boatman's grave slow English.

The tinker either could not or would not give any clear account of the way, and soon the ragged band resumed their march along the side of the loch. Dorothy got another glimpse of this wild crew. Just as William and she were returning to their starting-place, they saw the tinkers being taken across the loch in the ferry boat. The lame man sat at one end of the boat and his companions at the other, each of them with an enormous fishing rod, which looked very graceful and gallant, rather like masts, adding picturesqueness to the boat. The boatman told Dorothy that they were going to the other side to lodge in a farm-kiln, as they considered it their right and privilege to do, that they would gather heather or sticks for their fire, and would beg for food. There was something daring and carefree about the party, a fierce wild distinction that marked them off at once from the peasants. After begging at the ferryhouse they struck merrily through the fields and were lost to sight.

On getting to the inn Dorothy found the landlady waiting for her with kind looks, and offering to make a fire upstairs to dry their wet clothes. William and she greatly enjoyed an excellent supper of fresh salmon, a chicken and potatoes, and gooseberries and cream. The inn parlour seemed to them very comfortable after their day among the mists.

They set out early in the morning to make their way to Glen Coe by Connel Ferry. The morning was gloomy, but after a time the sun scattered the clouds and the loch was covered with dazzling sunshine that showed the indenting of the dark shores. On a bold promontory stood the stately ruins of Dunstaffnage Castle. Dorothy could see far off the island of Mull, a high mountain in the sea, green in the sunshine and overcast with clouds. Its colour was soft and clear like the green of a Western sky, and its loveliness seemed almost as unsubstantial and transitory. There was some-

thing visionary about it, as if, rising from the sea, it might at any moment dissolve before their eyes into soft clouds.

Connel Ferry was a dreary place. They had to wait some time for the boat to come from the other side, for, although the boatmen heard William's first hail, they moved with a surly slowness as though to show they were the masters. Four or five men came over with the boat, and Dorothy was distressed at their roughness to the horse, whom they terrified by driving him very harshly over rough stones, slippery as ice with the slimy seaweed, so that the poor creature even before he reached the boat was all a-quiver with fright and bewilderment, and they had to beat and push him over the edge by main force. One of the men, a wicked-looking one-eyed fellow, held him by force like a horse-breaker, but in his terror he fretted and stamped with his hoofs on the bare boards, frightening himself more with every stroke. The tide, which was rushing in violently and making a strong eddy with the stream of the loch, and the motion of the boat and the foam of the waves, terrified him so that he became furious, and plunging desperately first got his hind legs into the water, and then recovering himself beat with such force against the side of the boat that they were afraid he would send his hoofs through the wood. All the while the men were cursing and swearing, and when they reached the landing-place they whipped him ashore with brutal violence.

Dorothy felt as if she were in a nightmare. She was not well and she had looked forward to sitting by the fire in the ferryhouse and having some tea, but after the exhibition of violence they had witnessed, William and she were glad to pay the men off and go on their way breakfastless.

They travelled for some time over a black peat moss with a range of hills rising from it, of a very singular and delicate green. Near a rivulet on one hillside they came upon two herdsmen lying full in the sun, with their dogs, among a herd of black cattle which were sprinkled over the whole range of the hills.

Afterwards their road lay near the rocky coast. Dorothy noticed under the brow of one of the rocks a burying-ground, just within the sound of the gentlest waves of the sea, and fenced round by a

wall neatly sodded, as if to secure for it, among the sights and sounds of peace, a deeper peace.

Opposite, they could see the hills of Morven.

They were now coming near Loch Creran, where a second ferry had to be crossed. At the ferryhouse only women were at home. Dorothy, who was now both faint and cold, went in to sit by the fire. She would have been glad of some hot food, but the house was so dirty, and the women in it had something so forbidding in their expression and manner, that she had not the heart to eat in such a place. They had just taken off the fire a pan of potatoes, which they mixed with milk, and then all ate out of the same dish, the children putting in their dirty little hands to help themselves to the mixture. At last the ferryman came home, but they had to wait another hour for the tide.

They did not dare to take the horse into the boat. Although he was in great terror, they succeeded in making him swim across.

Their way was now through Appin, a broad glen opening to Loch Linnhe. William happened to say to a man whom they met driving a cart that it was a pretty wild place. The man replied: "Sir, it is a very bonny place if you did but see it on a fine day." Dorothy saw that he suspected and resented a touch of criticism in William's words. She realized that no place was so beautiful in his eyes as his native strath, with its wild glimpses of sea and sea loch, and of mountains beyond the sea, with the unenclosed hills on either side dotted with the black cattle at pasture.

Yet it was evident from his talk that he had been a great traveller.

Soon after this meeting they reached the village of Portnacroish, consisting of a few huts and an inn by the side of the loch. Here at last they could have food and warmth. They had a fire lighted, ordered a fowl for dinner, and then went out and from the top of a little hill looked down Loch Linnhe to the sea. Dorothy was entranced. What they saw was more beautiful than a dream. Clouds lay on the long range of the hills of Morven and mists

floated near to the water, yet the sky was clear and the sea reflected its sapphire blue; here and there were patches of dazzling sunshine on the water; one island near the shore was shadowed by an old keep, but the light shone on many islands, of a soft green, far greener, so it seemed to Dorothy, than the grass in other places. The very names of Morven and Appin added some element of beauty to the fair scene, Dorothy thought, and the sunbeams, Ossian's old friends, were like ghostly enchanters even in the strong light of the afternoon sun.

After leaving Portnacroish they stopped many times to look back and see if they could recapture this beauty. Dorothy felt that she could never remember it fully. It was too fair to be remembered. Emerald islands and sapphire sea would remain in the memory, but the something fairer than beauty, the something infinite, intricate, nameless, that was threaded into the pattern made by the mountains and mists and green islands and sunbeams and shining waters, must needs fade from the mind even as a vision fades.

It was late in the afternoon before they left Portnacroish. They were still travelling in the Strath of Duror when the moon came out, and daylight and moonlight blended in a curious soft glow. Their road lay at times through open fields where men and women were working. Dorothy thought there was a peculiar beauty in the attitudes of the groups of harvesters, stopping for a moment and leaning on pitchfork and rake as they looked up at the car. Each group had its own distinctive character, yet formed part of a whole that was bewitchingly harmonious and peaceful. The light of the moon shining on the upturned sunburnt faces softened each line to grace. Even the barking dogs hardly disturbed the impression of peace and grace made by the workers at the end of their day.

After this they met a tall man in a Highland bonnet with a little girl driving home the cow for the night, and then for a long time they saw neither man nor beast, although often they caught the gleam of the moonlight on the household linen that lay bleaching beside the streams. The road got very bad before they reached

Ballachulish, and just before they got to the village they came to a broken bridge. Some men who were passing offered to help William to drive the car through the water. Dorothy went on to the inn and ordered some tea and a fire, but she had to wait a long time before William appeared. The horse, who had been nervous all the day after his fright at Connel Ferry, had bolted at the sound of the wheels rattling over the river bed, and the men had finally to drag the car through the water themselves. William treated his helpers to a glass of whisky at the inn door. Dorothy was amused as she listened to him trying to deal with the questions showered on him by the Highlanders: "Where did he live?" "Was he married?—and had he an estate?"

Early in the morning, after drinking a bowl of milk, they set forward for Glen Coe, in the happiest mood imaginable. They were glad to think there were no more ferries to cross. But in thinking they were going to have a peaceful day they had reckoned without the horse, who was still all nerves, and who, just as they were bowling along a smooth road close to the water, suddenly backed, frightened by the upright shafts of a roller rising from behind the wall of a field adjoining the road. They leapt out of the car, none too soon, for the horse had backed down the bank of the loch, and in a moment the car was half in the water, while the horse lay on his back struggling with the harness. Dorothy thought this must be the end of the expedition, but a man came along who helped William to get the car up the bank and extricate the horse, and they saw no serious damage had been done. They mended the harness as well as they could with strings and pocket-handkerchiefs, and set out for the village which lay before them, William leading the horse all the way. The village consisted of a few huts under the mountains. William went to the smithy. Dorothy was made welcome by the blacksmith's wife, who received her so pleasantly in a kitchen that was all disorder that she thought there were times when it was almost a grace of temperament to be able to let things take care of themselves. Two or three children were running about, and the mother held a baby in her arms. She asked Dorothy, among other questions, whether she was married, and

how many brothers she had. Dorothy told her that the brother with whom she was travelling was married, and could not resist adding that he had a fine boy. She was not a little startled when the woman replied with emphasis: "*And* the man's a very decent man too."

This, to be sure, was a new way of looking at beloved William.

The blacksmith came in to his breakfast of dry bread and weak sugarless tea. All the time he ate he held his baby on his knee. He was impatient to finish mending the car, as he wanted to use the fine day for his haymaking. Dorothy said much of their hay must be spoiled, because of the wet.

"Oh no!" said he, "we get it in with a blink."

While the car was being mended they climbed the hill above the village. A slight shower came on as they were climbing, and when it passed they saw the whole of the opposite side of the mountain clothed in extraordinary beauty. A veil of transparent and iridescent light hung over it, of all the colours of the rainbow, and with the soft green of the mountain shining through. It was exquisite. Dorothy held her breath as she looked at it. She had never seen anything like it before. It was as if the whole mountain-side were wrapped in the splendour of one dilated rainbow, at once gorgeous and delicate.

It was one o'clock before they were ready to set out for Glen Coe, William riding the horse, Dorothy driven by a Highlander who had yoked his own horse to the car. They passed by a white house standing serenely in a green field under a hill, before they came to the glen. This was the house where the massacre had started. When they came to the glen, Dorothy remarked to her guide that there was something about it that spoke of former cultivation. The man told her that in days not so long past the glen had many inhabitants, and that there had been much corn where now there was only waste land and pasture for cattle. Dorothy was not so much impressed by the glen as by the mountains themselves. She gave up the attempt to describe the grandeur of these stern heights. Her mind went back to the words in which Milton attempted to describe sublimity: "His stature reacht the Skie."

They came to the door of a wretched hovel, half unroofed,

which seemed rather a howling-place for the winds than a place of shelter for human beings, when Dorothy saw to her surprise smoke issuing from the unglazed windows. "Is it possible any people can live there?" said she. The words were hardly out of her mouth when at least half a dozen people, men, women and children, came to the door. They were going to rebuild the hut, and throughout the winter they would shelter there, dealing out whisky to such travellers as passed the door.

At the door of the whisky-hovel their guide unyoked his horse from the car and set off homewards. By this time they were within sight of The King's House, where they were to pass the night. The inn was a large square building, cased in blue slates to defend it from the storms. Of all the dwellings Dorothy had ever seen, this made upon her the most fantastic impression of poverty. There was hardly a blade of grass on the ground in front of the house; even the heather had a starved look; the few potatoes that grew in a small plot were blighted and dwarfish. Inside the door were two sheep, hung up as if just killed, and their bones were barely covered by the flesh. There was in the house only one overworked woman who attended to the needs of numberless travellers. She was fierce and wild in her manner, although quite civil, but she screamed in Gaelic to the crowds of men in the house, mostly carriers and drovers, in the most horrible guinea-hen or peacock voice Dorothy had ever heard. The rooms were long and bare, with hardly anything in them but long rows of beds, and the floors were filthy. Dorothy was shown into one of the huge bare rooms. William came up to her after seeing the horse into the stable and watching him feeding, as was necessary, because in the stable also there was disorder. There were many horses, but there was no hay in the place, nor were there any stalls, so that when any horse was being fed all the others were like wild beasts straining to devour the corn.

They waited for nearly an hour before the woman had time to speak to them again, and promise them a fire in another room when two travellers, who were not staying for the night, had finished their whisky. Dorothy would have liked a light meal with tea, but the woman had no eggs, no milk, no bread. After a time,

however, the fire was kindled and supper was served, mutton so tough that it was impossible to eat even the scanty pieces of meat that were on the bones, and some tasteless soup. The woman said she had no potatoes in the house.

After supper she brought in two pairs of sheets which she begged Dorothy to air by the sitting-room fire, as they would be dirtied downstairs. Dorothy was very willing to do this, but she found to her dismay that the sheets were wringing wet, and, as the peats were also wet, the fire was smouldering rather than burning, and giving out very little heat. It was late before she got to bed. As she went to sleep she compared the desolate house on the desolate moor to one of those haunts of robbers described by novelists, where there is one woman to receive the plunder and feed the band.

This fantastic impression was not lessened in the morning. Dorothy, who was up at six o'clock, asked if they could have a couple of eggs boiled for them. A boy was sent to the outhouses to look for eggs, but returned after a long hunt with only one in his hand. It was a long time before they could get anything to eat, and they were perished with cold before they started. They could hear the restless guinea-hen screeching until they were well out of reach of the house.

The day was the fourth Sunday on which they had been travelling. For a mile or two they had to walk, as they were ascending the Black Mount. Then they came upon a fine new road, down which they descended rapidly. The sun came out and the mountain tops were clear, and Dorothy began to enjoy herself very much, although she had never seen a more desolate region. As if The King's House had cast a blight on everything near it, there was neither grass nor flower within four miles of it.

They breakfasted at the hamlet of Inveroran. The breakfast was very poor; but Dorothy was delighted with the glimpses she had of the inn kitchen. Seven or eight drovers, with their collies beside them, were sitting in a circle round a peat fire in the middle of the floor, each of them eating his porridge from a wooden bowl

on his knee. A pot suspended from one of the black rafters was boiling on the fire. Two or three women were washing in the kitchen, and children were playing on the floor. The smoky air served only to give a kind of harmony to the happy confusion of the picture.

At Tyndrum, which they reached in the afternoon, they learned to their great surprise that Coleridge had recently been at the inn. The landlady remembered the day distinctly. She said it had been the day of the "great speet" and they thought it must have been the day after he left them.

After leaving Tyndrum they travelled through a pleasant glen. They were interested to see on the side of a sunny hill a band of men and women gathered together to worship. Later, when the evening was coming on, and one or two pale stars were in the sky, they saw on a hill that faced the bright yellow clouds of the West two herdsmen, with a dog beside them, sitting overlooking a herd of cattle. Seen against the bright sky, the forms of the men were quite distinct in the fading light. Dorothy thought they made a picture of exceeding simplicity and grace, in the quiet of the Sabbath evening.

They spent the night at Luib, where the servant was surly to them because they ordered no wine. They breakfasted on the Monday morning at Killin, after which they travelled to Kenmore on Loch Tay. On the Tuesday they travelled through the valley of the Tay, passing through Aberfeldy, where they admired laburnums growing as a field hedge, their autumn leaves as golden as their spring blossoms. It was very dark when they passed through Killiecrankie, and they were completely tired before arriving at Blair-Atholl, between ten and eleven o'clock.

They had now reached the most northerly point of their tour, but they were both reluctant to turn their backs on the Highlands, and taking out their map they looked to see if they could find any place of interest to visit which would keep them a day longer before beginning their homeward journey. They fixed on Loch Rannoch, where they had been told they might see much of the

simplicity of a Highlander's life, but the way proved too difficult for the car, and wearied they turned back towards Faskally. The next day they visited Killiecrankie by daylight, and went on to Dunkeld.

They had now to decide how they would conclude the tour, whether they would go direct to Perth and Edinburgh, or revisit the Trossachs. They both wished very much to go back to Loch Katrine, and to see something of Glenfalloch at the head of Loch Lomond. And so they made their way through Glen Almond to Crieff on the Friday, and through Strath Earn to Callander on the Saturday.

On the Sunday they set off for the Trossachs in the car, immediately after breakfast. They were accompanied by a boy, who, when they reached Loch Achray, was to take the horse and car back to Callander. When they came to Loch Achray in the sunshine, they thought it even more beautiful than when they had seen it in the mists. Again Dorothy felt that no description could do justice to its beauty. They had lunch by the loch, after which they spent some hours in exploring. Then they set out to walk to the ferryman's hut at Loch Katrine. The spell of the place was again strong on them. The mountains were clear; the lake was calm; the air was sweet, and the Western sky was in front of them. When they were within a quarter of a mile from the ferryman's hut, they met two neatly dressed women, hatless, taking an evening walk. One of them said: "What, you are stepping westward?" The charming voice and the friendliness of the words, spoken in the lonely place, while the Western sky was still glowing with the flush of sunset, made on Dorothy an impression curiously poetical. She felt somehow that the perfect word had dropped from heaven, making exquisite all they saw.

When they got to the ferryman's hut Mrs. McGregor in her fine Sunday cloak was standing at the door of the hut, for she had just come in from a service at the lakeside. She was very pleased to see them, and Dorothy was glad to find herself again in the welcoming kitchen with its elegant gleaming rafters. She had only one regret, that Coleridge was not with them.

She slept in the bed she had occupied during her former visit. When she wakened in the morning and looked out through the window-place at the head of the bed, she saw that the sun was shining on the hills. She was glad of this, for they had planned a long day's expedition to Glenfalloch. The ferryman was to be their guide.

He rowed them across Loch Katrine, and once more they walked over the moors to Inversnaid. Here they heard that Coleridge after leaving them had returned to the ferryhouse for his watch, which he had left behind. The boat was just ready to start to carry across Loch Lomond a poor man seeking work, his wife, and a little girl of about three years of age, who was terrified of the water and who cried all the way. Dorothy felt an almost painful feeling of pity for the little girl's mother, thus braving unknown ways, and carrying heavy burdens of mind and body all the time.

When they got out of the boat, they had about ten miles to walk to Glenfalloch. The houses were few, and the chief impression made upon Dorothy was of solitude and vastness. The ferryman was for the most part silent, but he said a word or two now and again, always interesting. Once he pointed to two small rocky islands in the loch and said: "It will be gay and dangerous sailing there in stormy weather when the water is high." Dorothy smiled as she assented, for she thought "gay and dangerous" a very curious confusion of speech. The most remarkable thing they saw in their walk was a huge stone by the side of the loch, sloping on one side like the roof of a house, and covered with heather. The boatman told them that the minister of Arrochar held a service at the stone once every three months. Dorothy found her imagination busy with the thought of Highland worship and open-air services. The rock had no overhanging part to give shelter—why was it then selected for worship? Was it dimly associated in the minds of the people with some immemorial superstition? Had its obscurity and strangeness, the impression of power which it made, some influence in causing it to be selected by the first worshipper as the site of his worship? Had these things any influence on the present worshippers and the nature of their worship? These

thoughts passed through her mind. It seemed to her that the continuation of the ridge of mountains forming the valley of Loch Lomond, behind the stone, and the loch in front, formed a magnificent temple, of which the stone itself was the *sanctum sanctorum*.

Glenfalloch they found to be a glen of about four miles long, with a few scattered huts here and there. Nobody was at home in the inn, but the boatman shouted, for he wanted a glass of whisky, and a young woman in a white bed-gown came in from the hay-field. There was no whisky, so they all had whey to drink. After a short rest they set out on their return walk. They were to return to Loch Katrine over a mountain. First they had to cross a river, over which the boatman carried Dorothy in his arms.

When they were so high up the mountainside as to be almost out of sight of the green fields of Glenfalloch, they sat down for a little, and heard, as if from the heart of the earth, the hollow solemn sound of torrents ascending out of the long glen. As far as the eye could see there was perfect stillness. Yet the sound was everywhere. It was as if solemn sound were breathed through the pores of the green earth. Dorothy was much moved. William said the glen should be called *The Vale of Awful Sound*.

They climbed higher and higher, and sometimes the walking was very rough. Dorothy was amazed at the way in which the boatman found a track, where to her none was visible. When they were making their way along the top of the mountain, which was surrounded by a high circle of distant mountains yet more lofty, they passed a heap of scattered stones round which was a belt of grass, rich and green, where all else was poor heather or spongy moss. The boatman, who had been silent for a time, paused, and said with deep feeling:

"This place is much changed since I was here twenty years ago."

He told them that the heap of stones had been the hut of a family who lived in the glen in the winter but regularly brought their goats in the summer to feed on the mountains, and that night and morning the flock was milked close to the doors, which was why the grass was yet so green near the stones. He added that

there had been a plain track over the mountains in these days, made by fishermen from Arrochar carrying herrings over to Loch Katrine when the glens were still full of people.

From the mountain they descended into Glen Gyle, above Loch Katrine. No dwelling was to be seen in the once peopled glen but Glen Gyle House. The boatman went to the place where he had left his boat, meaning to row across the loch to them. Dorothy and William called at the Macfarlanes' door, but the family was out in the fields. They walked past the second farmhouse till they came to the burying-ground that stood so sweetly near the water-side. The boatman, who was proud of his clan and had much simple pride of ancestry, had told them Rob Roy was buried here. They went to look for the grave, but the inscriptions on the stones were worn out and the place was choked up with weeds and brambles.

After this they saw the boat coming across the water, and Dorothy, who was stiff and tired, was glad to sit down and be rowed to the hut. The stars were beginning to appear, but the brightness of the West was not yet gone, and it diffused a solemn brightness over the loch, which was quite still. At first the boat passed under steep crags hung with birches; afterwards it pushed out further into the water when the banks were not so sheer. Everything seemed at rest except the boat, whose motion only increased the sense of rest. Even the mountain streams were heard but faintly. The peace sank deep into Dorothy's heart. The boatman rowed them home in an almost unbroken silence. When Dorothy went to bed soon after supper, she fell asleep on her chaff mattress, under her open window, much as she would fall asleep when a child, after the long day's playing of a summer holiday.

They both felt that this perfect expedition was the ending of their holiday in the Highlands, although they still had a day's journeying in the mountains before them, as they were returning to Callander by Loch Voil and Loch Lubnaig. That day, when walking towards Loch Voil, they came upon several deserted shielings. As they rested beside one of these heaps of stones, on

a green hillock whose grass seemed remarkably soft and silky in texture in contrast to the surrounding heather, William told Dorothy that he wished he could put into verse what he felt about these old unhappy far-off things and inarticulate sorrows already forgotten by the world.

Evening came on them before they reached Callander, and they spent the night in a village not far from Loch Lubnaig. Dorothy sat in the kitchen with the mistress of the house, who was baking barley-cakes which she kneaded with her hands till they were as thin as oat-cakes. Watching her slow work, Dorothy could not help asking the woman why she did not use a rolling-pin, but the reply given was of the vaguest, such as that it was the custom to use the hands. As they chatted the woman asked many questions, not, it seemed to Dorothy, as if she were impertinent or curious, but rather in the spirit of a child asking for stories. Among other questions she asked if Dorothy was married, and looked much surprised when she was answered "No," but then, as if settling on a satisfactory explanation, said in a very simple and pious way, in her slow English: "To be sure, there is a very great promise for virgins in heaven."

Dorothy was much surprised and amused.

On the Wednesday they reached Callander early in the morning, and set out for Stirling, feeling that now they were indeed leaving the mountains behind. Long before they reached the town, they saw the castle on its stately height. After going to see the castle they went on to Falkirk. On the way they admired the fiery glow cast on the evening sky by the Carron ironworks. When they got near Falkirk they found the road full of cattle and horsemen coming from a fair. As they were going through a turnpike gate, a Highland drover asked them if they had enjoyed their journey. He said he had passed them on the Black Mountain. Dorothy was charmed.

The next day they passed through Linlithgow, and reached Edinburgh a little before sunset. They drove up to The White Hart in the Grassmarket, and had tea before going out to see the castle in the fading light. William asked the ostler what the

weather was going to be like, and Dorothy looked up with quick interest when the man said that the sky was "gay and dull." Here again was the curious confusion she had noticed in the speech of her friend the boatman.

In the morning the sky was not only "gay and dull" but very dark, and soon the rain came down heavily. Despite this, they went to Holyrood, climbed Arthur Seat, and looked down on the misty grey-shrouded town. They both thought Edinburgh very beautiful. Dorothy thought it like a visionary city, rather like a child's conception of Bagdad or Balsora. The castle rock loomed very large through the misty air.

William said the town gave him the impression of being throned on crags.

At about six in the evening they left the town for Roslin, where they spent the night.

They were up early in the morning, and walked through the glen of Roslin past Hawthornden to visit Walter Scott at Lasswade. They were too early for Mr. and Mrs. Scott, who were still in bed, but who when they appeared were most hospitable. They stayed at Lasswade till about two o'clock. Mr. Scott told them that he would meet them at Melrose two days later.

They returned to Roslin and had dinner at the inn, after which they went to see the inside of the chapel. Dorothy thought the architecture exquisitely beautiful, the stone both of the roof and walls being carved with leaves and flowers so delicately perfect in outline that she could have admired them for hours—and stained by time to the softest colours, some of them being of a marvellous soft green. Round a cluster of these leaves at the top of one pillar a small fern was growing, which blended so perfectly with the carving that it was not easy to distinguish the living leaves from the carved ones, although the fern was of rather a deeper tone.

After this they set out for Peebles, which they reached at dusk.

In the morning, the sixth Sunday on which they had been travelling, they felt that they were within reach of home. Before completing their circuit they wished to see something of the

Tweed, a name which Dorothy had loved from her earliest childhood.

After breakfast they set out to walk up the river to Neidpath Castle, about half a mile from the town. Poor William was stopped by someone in the street who questioned him as to whether he was an Irishman or a foreigner. Everyone was talking so much of French invasion that a stranger, touring in a car, seemed an object of suspicion. The road to the castle was carried in a very beautiful line along the side of the hill; the river wound between green steeps upon which flocks of sheep were pasturing; the grey hills were soft and low. Dorothy felt the harmony of the scene. Peebles itself, an old town, built of grey stone, formed part of the harmony.

Their day's journey was along the banks of the Tweed to Clovenfords. Dorothy loved the country through which they were passing. It had a pensive softness which charmed her. The day was clear, without wind, and as it was Sunday all work in the fields was stopped. A Sabbath peace was added to the gentleness of the countryside. The river as it flowed made a gentle sound, and its murmuring mingled with the bleating of sheep. They thought the valley, though in the bright sunshine, had some of the soft grace which most places have only in the light of the moon.

In one part the road was closed by a gate which was opened by an old woman who lived in a cottage close to it.

"You live in a very pretty place," said Dorothy to the woman, who replied:

"Yes, the water of Tweed is a bonny water!"

Dorothy's heart warmed to the speaker. The words had in them the proud cadence of a life-long love.

Passing a sunny knoll they came upon a shepherd lying in the midst of his flock with his face turned towards the sky.

All the sights and sounds of the day were of peace.

At Clovenfords they lodged at a house recommended by Mr. Scott. This house had no appearance of being an inn, but as soon as they mentioned Mr. Scott the mistress of it showed them all civility. She told them Mr. Scott was a very clever gentleman, and that he always came to her at the fishing season. Dorothy had the

feeling that by mentioning Mr. Scott's name she might be hospitably entertained throughout the borders of Scotland.

Early the next day they went to Melrose, where they had breakfast, after which they went out to see the abbey. Mr. Scott met them in the street and took them to the abbey himself. He proved a wonderful guide, pointing out to Dorothy many pieces of beautiful carving which, as they were in obscure corners, she would otherwise have missed. They dined at the inn with him, and noticed that he was treated by the people of the inn with great respect. Dorothy and William shared in this glory, but the landlady made it clear that it was a reflected glory. She would not show Dorothy the beds or make any promise to accommodate them until she had heard from "the Sheriff's" own lips that he had no objection to sharing a room with Mr. Wordsworth.

Mr. Scott, who as Sheriff of Selkirk was travelling to the assizes at Jedburgh, left very early in his gig the next morning. They soon followed in their car, intending to visit Dryburgh Abbey on the way. As they reached Dryburgh a heavy rain overtook them and drenched them. The gate was opened to them by an old woman bent almost double, with thick eyebrows overhanging a hooked nose and a complexion stained brown with smoke, and she smelt as strongly of peat smoke as if she were breathing out smoke not only through her lungs but from every pore. A child would have been frightened of her, Dorothy thought.

They arrived at Jedburgh just half an hour before the adjournment of the Court for dinner, and were well treated at the inn when they mentioned the Sheriff, but the only vacant sitting-room was the one occupied by the Judge. Dorothy was conducted into it on condition that she would give it up the moment the Judge came from Court. After she had put off her wet clothes she went into a bedroom and there sat shivering until the landlady had procured lodgings for them in a private house.

The mistress of the house was an old woman of about seventy years of age, who moved about with the joyous bustle of a girl of seventeen, and who talked with amazing vivacity. Mr. Scott came over to their rooms for an hour or so, and recited to them part of

The Lay of the Last Minstrel. The following day he came to them when the business of the courts was over and walked up the Jed with them. The wind was tossing the branches of the trees and the sunshine dancing among the leaves. Dorothy exclaimed: "What a life there is in trees!" on which Mr. Scott told her that a young lady bred in the Orkneys had once said exactly the opposite to him, when she had spent a summer holiday at Kelso. She had said that nothing on the mainland had disappointed her so much as the trees, which, compared with the sound and grandeur of the ever-changing ocean, were lifeless and dull.

They had dinner sent in from the inn, and were extravagant enough to order a bottle of wine, that they might not disgrace "the Sheriff."

Mr. Scott supped with them in the evening, and talked a good deal in his interesting, simple, lively, picturesque way. He stayed late, and before he left he was again persuaded to repeat some of his poem.

The business of the assizes closed on the following day, and they went into the Court to hear the Judge's speech, which seemed to Dorothy the most amazing mixture of old-wife oratory and newspaper-article loyalty she had ever heard. Then they watched the Court return to the inn to the sound of a trumpet, the Judge first in his robes of red, the Sheriffs next, in large cocked hats, and the inferior officers following. They thought Mr. Scott looked a trifle uncomfortable at forming part of the trumpety procession.

After this they returned to their rooms to say good-bye to their lively old landlady, who, they found, had put up sandwiches and cheese-cakes for them, and had been out to buy some "Jeddered" pears for Dorothy. Mr. Scott, glad to part with the Judge and his retinue, drove with them to Hawick. Dorothy found him the best of company. She thought it would be wonderful to travel with him in the remote dales of the county, for they scarcely passed a dwelling-place or a landmark about which he had not some story. He had an eye like a hawk. Seeing Dorothy look at a house which stood high on a hill on the opposite side of the river, he told her that the owner had collected all the gods of India. That such an

assembly of monsters should find a home in quiet Teviotdale seemed to Dorothy curiously interesting and fantastic.

The next morning they parted from him, very regretfully. Their way was still through the vale of Teviot, near the banks of the river. They saw Johnny Armstrong's keep and tried to find some old trees which, Mr. Scott had said, marked the place where Johnny Armstrong was hanged, but they failed to find the spot. They wished they had their lively, all-knowing and all-seeing guide with them again.

At Moss Paul they fed the horse, and ate the cheese-cakes and sandwiches given them by their landlady the day before. They spent the night at Langholm.

On the Saturday morning they rose early and travelled before breakfast to Longtown. They were now within hail of home. When they came to the well-remembered guide-post which had set them on their way six weeks before, Dorothy felt that their circuit was indeed at an end.

It was good to be so near home, to know that soon they would see the sun on the walls of Carlisle and that they would be at Grasmere on the morrow. Yet as Dorothy looked along the white ribbon of road leading to the Solway Moss, her heart was full and her feelings were mingled. She was more than half regretful that the six weeks of wandering were over. It had been a wonderful holiday, more than a holiday, a renewal of being.

In travelling from place to place she had felt the rhythm of living—throughout a country, enabling her for the moment to adjust the pulse-beat of her own life, too rapid and intense, to the universal pulse-beat.

She had fed to the full on beauty. Glenfalloch and its sounding streams, the soft greenness of deserted shielings, the shining waters of Loch Katrine, stiller than silence, the fair intricate pattern of the islands of Loch Lomond and Loch Linnhe—had satisfied heart and soul and sense.

Coming on life in solitary places where life was not obscured by the machinery of living, she felt as if she had glimpsed something

of the nature of Life itself, infinite and unchangeable, and in its essence beautiful. Land birds and sea birds wheeling and screaming in the mists above Loch Etive, a lonely child uttering broken cries on a stormy hillside, shepherds lying in the sun amid their flocks, tall old men, dignified as gods, walking in the evening by moorland cornfields, wildcat Highland tinkers forcing their way through the heather and bracken to their evening lair, a woman milking the cow for breakfast—that was Life.

Yet one memory remained, troubling even to dismay, of a life lived in solitude, surrounded not by the symbols of Life, but of Death-in-Life—the memory dominant, persistent, of a glen seen near Crawfordjohn in the first week of the tour, and a solitary woman who sat, like one keeping tryst with No-Destiny, in a ruined field near a ruined cottage and a group of ruined trees, her eyes not lifted to the encompassing hills, exquisite and indifferent, but lowered to the dull yellow of the weeds flowing about her feet like a sulphur sea.



CHAPTER II

A little infant, that breeds it's teeth, should it lie with thee, would crie out, as if thou wert the more unquiet bed-fellow.

“THE DUTCHESS OF MALFY.”

It was Sunday evening before they arrived home, to find Mary and Joanna Hutchinson in the cottage, and Johnny, in spite of his six weeks' steady growth, still looking the littlest of Johnnies, asleep in the clothes-basket by the fire. The cottage seemed as peaceful as any of the havens on which they had looked longingly during their travels, and they felt that it was very good to be home again.

Coleridge—Mary told them—had returned to Keswick only a few days before, eager to welcome Robert and Edith Southey, who had come to make their home in Greta Hall. When he came to see them, they were surprised at the amount of wandering he had done on foot. He told them that after leaving them he had returned to Tarbet, where he had spent the night; that he had gone on the next day to Glenfalloch, where he had slept at the little inn; and that on hearing from the innkeeper Glen Coe was within forty miles, he had been unable to resist the desire to see it, and had reached it almost shoeless after a very lonely walk through moorlands with huge mountains. Like Dorothy he had felt that the discomfort of The King's House was almost fantastic. He had crossed to Fort William to walk along the whole line of the Forts, but unluckily had been clapped into Fort Augustus on suspicion of being a spy. He told them that he thought the four things most worth seeing in Scotland were—the islands seen from Inchta-vannach, the Trossachs, the Falls of Foyers, and Edinburgh, which he thought magnificent. With Glen Coe he had been a little disappointed. The crags were not as precipitous or as bare as they had seemed in the drawings he had seen of them.

Dorothy, although a few days before she had felt she could

willingly prolong her wanderings indefinitely, was now well content to be at rest. Indeed, it was soon evident that she had reached home none too early. The Glenfalloch expedition, with the long climb over the mountain on the return journey, enjoyable as it had been, had been too exhausting for her. She took some time to recover from this exhaustion. In the first week after her return she had several attacks of sudden sickness, and this kept her from going out very much.

The chief talk in the village was the expected invasion of the French. In the beginning of October, William, with the greater part of the men of Grasmere, went to Ambleside to volunteer his services. Dorothy and Mary hoped that the men of such quiet Northern villages would be called upon to serve only if the French were successful after landing, and if that happened they might as well all go together. They wanted William to put off volunteering until the body of the people should be called upon, but he refused to listen to them. He was a most determined hater of the French.

In spite of the activity of the Grasmere volunteers and their drilling and marching past the house in their red coats two or three times a week to be exercised at Ambleside, no place could seem further removed from war or arms than Grasmere valley under the hills in the bright autumn days. The valley seemed a valley consecrated to peace. Dorothy thought Scotland itself in its autumn purple was not more beautiful than the fells in the tawny hues of the decaying fern. Coleridge said that these hues had all the colours of the unripe lime, of the ripe lemon, and of the bright orange, even to the depth of dried orange-peel. Old John Fisher thought the gorgeous glow more luxuriant than he remembered to have seen it. The leaves of the decaying birches carried on into the late autumn the lovely lemon colour which the ferns had in their middle season of decay.

The beginning of November was remarkably mild. During the first two weeks of the month the birds were singing in the fine sweet rain as if it were the rain of spring, and as if, said Coleridge, they mistook the decaying foliage for flowers and blossoms. The mountains and lakes were in great beauty.

Coleridge's children were christened on the second Tuesday of the month. Dorothy was Derwent's godmother—Coleridge always said Derwent was her favourite—but she did not go to the christening. She had not been very well a short time before, and William, knowing that noise and much company usually gave her a bad headache, persuaded her not to go. She heard all about the merrymaking, though, and about the little pig from Eusemere which had been one of the principal dishes.

When she went out on fine days she now usually carried Johnny, and sometimes she was accompanied by a group of little girls, delighted to have the chance of playing with the baby. The second Sunday of the month, although the day was bitter with a keen wind and there was a touch of snow on the hills, she took Johnny out, well wrapped up in flannels, and he was delighted with the feel of the wind against his face. Sara Driver and Hannah Lewthwaite, two little girls from the neighbouring cottages, attached themselves to her, and Johnny cast his eyes upon little Hannah walking beside him, and laughed and talked to her in his way. In the afternoon Hannah, who was a fine little nurse, and who felt the proudest child in Grasmere if she were allowed to have the baby in her arms, came in to sit in the parlour downstairs and see if she would be allowed to nurse Johnny. But old Molly, whom Dorothy had heard several times during the week telling Johnny that she would "dress herself" for him on Sunday, had already put on her best gown and taken the child on her lap. This was her Sunday afternoon's treat. Dorothy, who was upstairs writing, smiled as she listened to the sounds from the parlour, and thought that Johnny, in the bonny little blue and white dress given him by their friend, Bell Addison, was like a little king, lording it over his young nurse and his old.

The third week in November she was busy superintending a grand washing. Every five weeks or so they had Jenny Hodgson to do a big washing in the kitchen they had fitted up in Fletcher's cottage across the road. During the last week of the month Dorothy and old Molly tidied the garden, putting it into its winter trim and clearing the orchard of the fluttering and rotting leaves that encumbered the paths. They were just in time with this work, for at

the end of November the bitter weather came. There was much snow on the hills, and the trees were leafless, all but the low oak coppices. Only indoor work was possible now. Dorothy loved the first long nights of autumn, giving time for reading and study. Feeling that the impression of the holiday in Scotland was losing its first freshness, she began, during the long quiet evenings, to write her *Recollections* of her wanderings. Side by side with William at the round green table by the fireside in the sitting-room upstairs she worked, while the only sound in the room apart from the scratching of her pen was the ticking of the watch hung up above their heads, or the turning over of the leaves. William was much interested in the progress of the journal. He was unable to get on either with the *Poem to Coleridge* or *The Recluse*, but now and again he would catch fire from something Dorothy had described, and give her some verses for her record.

Coleridge was all the time trying to complete his plans for travel. He complained constantly of many maladies—dropsy, rheumatism, colic and dysentery, gout, which at times lamed him, and a shortness of breath which plagued him in damp weather. Worse than all these put together were the pains of sleep which made him dread the coming on of night as a time of torture. He felt that dreams were to him no shadows, but the very calamities of his life. He was convinced that eighteen months of residence in a warmer climate would free him from the peculiar mixture of physical and mental torment which was gradually sapping his life.

On December 20th he came to Grasmere with Derwent, meaning to spend one day, he said, before going on to Kendal and thence to visit his brother in Devonshire. But he could not tear himself away immediately, and they were delighted when he decided to stay for a few days. Dorothy liked to watch him with Derwent, with whom he was quite different from what he was with Hartley. Hartley he regarded with a kind of wonder, as if the child were a being not quite of this earth. He treated him as more than an equal. It was wonderful to see the two together, mind-challenging mind. Derwent, on the other hand, was a child very much of the earth. He was like a little cube of fat, and his chubby

babyhood delighted the eye. His father regarded him with a kind of affectionate amusement. "Come and look at his darling mouth when he shouts out Q," he said one day when Derwent was learning his letters.

They were all fond of Derwent, especially Dorothy, to whom the affectionate little fellow would run many times a day to tell his little stories and sing his little songs. He was rather inclined to over-eat, and after every meal would run to Dorothy for comfort, saying plaintively: "My belly is full." Johnny and he became great playfellows.

William felt almost at once the stimulus of talk with Coleridge, who was still full of interest in *The Recluse*, and the first few days of the visit were delightful, spent in walking and in conversation. But just about the time definitely fixed for leaving, Coleridge did not seem well, and put off going, and after that he seemed to lose the will to go, although every day he spoke of going. This made a heavy time for Dorothy. The ordinary routine of the house was interrupted. A bed had to be moved into the sitting-room every evening and taken out in the morning. Coleridge would be late in going to bed and late in rising, and during the daytime would be continually wanting coffee or broth or something or other. Every time the weather was damp he was ill and needed constant attention. The two children made a good deal more work than Johnny alone had made. Mary had a bad cold and could not do much to help. And poor Molly, who had been failing throughout the winter, and who just managed to be of some service when the routine of the house was steady, was useless and bewildered when regular hours were no longer possible. Dorothy, remembering her willing service in the first years at the cottage, her eager active generous way of throwing herself into her work while yet she had any strength, could not bear to think of parting from her, and yet it was clear that the work of the household was increasing and that Molly's strength was decreasing. This troubled her a good deal.

More than any of these things, however, something about Coleridge himself began to weigh upon Dorothy and exhaust her, a restlessness more than could be accounted for by the troubles of which he spoke constantly—his lack of health, his money diffi-

culties, his jarrings with his wife. Dorothy had a sense of something being wrong with him, something which she could not define and which she did not wish to define, which yet lurked like a shadow in her thoughts and which on being confronted lost even its shadow substance. In the daytime, although sometimes fatigued after distressed nights, he seemed happy enough, magnetic, life-giving in his talk, but during the night his cries rang through the cottage. Dorothy felt dimly that there was something—she knew not what—beyond the worries of which she knew, which delivered him over to this torment, something which had to be met and mastered before there could be any deliverance from it. While William, whom Coleridge had won over to his point of view, talked confidently of the value of residence abroad, she would fall silent, feeling an obscure trouble. Coleridge seemed to her in his dreadful restlessness like a man yielding to a foe. At moments he seemed like a man deceiving himself.

He left them on January 14th, when he set out on foot, intending to walk to Kendal and get the coach there. William, who accompanied him as far as Troutbeck, came home saying that he had walked well and without the least fatigue. Yet only a few days before he had been very ill indeed, lame with gout and utterly exhausted by dreadful dreams. It was all very strange and disquieting.

Just about this time, like everybody else in the Vale, they were very much surprised to hear that Miss Sympson was married to young Ibbetson. She was thirty-seven years old, so that the lad was little more than half her age, in addition to being penniless and without prospects. It was strange to think of Miss Sympson, the home-maker, the dear and trusted companion of her father's walks, the support and comfort of her mother, being swept off her feet in this way by a boy and going her own way without saying a word to anybody, in a flash of passion. Poor old Mrs. Sympson had known nothing of the marriage until it was over, and was greatly distressed over everything connected with it. She was somewhat consoled, however, when her daughter promised that she would never leave her.

The general opinion was that Miss Sympson, though reckoned a very sensible woman, had done a crazy thing.

Each time Dorothy thought of her, it was with a sudden welling-up of pity.

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Mary and Dorothy now had a busy time, getting through arrears of work. There was much sewing to be done, and a large three days' washing to be superintended in the kitchen in Fletcher's cottage. Dorothy was not as well as she would have wished to be in meeting this work. All the winter she had been troubled by attacks of sickness. The February after Coleridge's departure she was very far from well. William, who was puzzled by the sudden complete exhaustions that came upon her and the fits of sickness that had no apparent reason, begged her, at the end of the month, to consult Dr. Beddoes of Bristol, of whom, like Coleridge, he had the highest opinion, both as a physician and as a man. Mrs. Clarkson had just gone to Bristol to be under Dr. Beddoes's care, and William wished Dorothy to approach the doctor through Mrs. Clarkson.

Dorothy was very unwilling to do this; she hated troubling either Mrs. Clarkson or Dr. Beddoes. But William insisted, and at last, to please him, she wrote to Mrs. Clarkson, describing the physical course of her attacks, which were all of the same kind, beginning in headache, pallor and tired looks, and ending with sickness, sharp pain in the bowels, and violent disorder. William read the letter and was not satisfied with it. He thought Dorothy had not given Dr. Beddoes the clue to the nature of her trouble, which he believed was nervous and not physical. There was nothing in the simple and wholesome diet in which they all shared to bring on such violent distress. So he bade her take up her pen again and add that the attacks were always preceded by some kind of agitation. He felt sure that it was excess of feeling that led to Dorothy's sudden illnesses. He did not always understand what had caused the feeling, but over and over again he had seen her suddenly go white when reading some of Coleridge's heart-rending letters, and very often the pallor had been followed by acute bodily

distress. He had noted sometimes signs of distress when she was replying to these shattering letters. It vexed him to see her so much at the mercy of feeling, and he wished that some remedy could be found.

He had noticed too that loss of sleep for any reason was apt to distress her very much. During Coleridge's longer visits, when they all sat up very late at night talking, she would gradually look more and more tired until at last, after a few days, she would have to give way to headache and complete fatigue, which might be the beginning of one of her short sharp illnesses; loss of sleep from agitation of any kind, or from pressure of work, had the same effect. Remembering this, he made her tell Dr. Beddoes also that if she were for any reason sleeping badly she was the more likely to suffer from one of her attacks.

Dorothy wrote all he wished, but she did not believe that Dr. Beddoes or any doctor could help her in any but the most superficial way. Her trouble was no new one, but had been with her in some measure all her life, and she had already learned to guard herself against it. She had suffered ever since childhood from a painful sensitiveness which she could not control, and she knew that many things, quite trivial in themselves and quite harmless to others, wearied and exhausted her and drained her of strength. As long as she could remember she had been apt to get headaches from going into crowded rooms or noisy gatherings, or from meeting strangers. To have to talk for any length of time to uncongenial people exhausted her. At some times she was more sensitive than at others. Always when she was not in uncommon strength of body she was more easily upset. There were days when any prolonged effort distressed her. At times writing brought on a kind of confused trouble. The effort to describe with exactitude something seen or heard made her blood beat fast, and filled her whole body with painful unrest and agitation.

She had learned to guard against these times and seasons and sources of unrest, chiefly by seeking to keep herself quiet when she felt the beginnings of trouble. But she could not always take the rest she needed, now that the family was increasing. And there were deeper sources of trouble against which she could not guard

—dim questionings and disquietudes, the fluctuations of feeling from day to day, moods in which the senses were shaken. It was true, she knew, that from these she had suffered in recent years far more deeply than ever before. And most unluckily, although she could control all signs of this suffering, the sudden treacherous physical distress came upon her more and more frequently, making even Mary wonder whether something was wrong with her, and William feel that there was some element, discordant, dangerous, disturbing the balance of her life. But she did not see that there could be any end to her disorder until she had control over her thoughts and mastery over her disquiet. No one could help her in the daily, silent, obscure, close, mortal combat against the grain of Life.

One thing was reassuring to both Mary and William: although Dorothy was subject to these curious sudden attacks of sickness, when she was well she had great endurance for one so slight, and this seemed to show that unusual strength of body went with her passionate sensibility. She had always been able to walk great distances. Now she had got used to carrying Johnny, and could walk with the baby for hours, although the others found him a great weight.

Walking with Johnny was indeed becoming one of Dorothy's chief pleasures. In the first mild days of spring, when the gardens were bright with snowdrops and crocuses, when the primroses were appearing in the hedges and the grass was putting out its softest green, Johnny was charmed with the world around him. He became more interesting every day. It was delightful to see him happy as a bird in the open air, enjoying the sounds he heard and taking notice of them, laughing and showing his two teeth in the most joyous way at the crying of the crows high up in the sky, turning quick as a little kitten to listen to the wind in the trees, hanging over any murmuring stream. Dorothy insisted that he recognized a fine view and acclaimed it with a special exclamation of pleasure: "Hooy, hooy, hooy!" uttered in the sweetest tones possible. To her he never seemed to lack words. She found him a most eloquent converser with eyes, hands and lips.

She was not able to go out of doors with him as much as she would have liked, for Coleridge still kept her busy. No sooner was he away from Grasmere than a kind of hunger for William's poems took hold of him, and he begged for a copy of them. The copying of these poems from all sorts of odd notebooks and scraps of paper kept both Mary and Dorothy busy. Many a morning they sat steadily transcribing, while Johnny was left to play with his toes or to amuse himself by routing in his mother's work-basket like a little pussy-cat. If these amusements failed, they took him to a glass door into the orchard, which had just been made at the turning of the staircase leading from the parlour, and then he would be still at once, looking at his own reflection in the glass or gazing into the orchard.

The copying was not an easy task, for the manuscripts were in wretched condition. William gave the work constant superintendence. He too was busy in his way. He had no place of his own in the cottage—many a time Dorothy thought of the sweet retreat of the little island near Inchtavannach, and wished she could secure its privacy for him—so he would go out every morning, wet or fine, to compose, and usually he came back to them with some part of the *Poem to Coleridge* ready for them to take down. They would see him now and again, standing quite still in the road or in the middle of a field, meditating in the rain. When he was near the house Dorothy would smile sometimes to hear him interrupt his meditations to talk to the cow, instant to hear and respond to him in her own way.

On March 6th, Dorothy was able to write to Coleridge, telling him that they had transcribed all the shorter poems, and were beginning on the *Poem to Coleridge* and *The Pedlar*. She had meant to write only a brief note, for in the afternoon she had been to a sale with Mary, and the noise of the crowds, with the smell of gin, rum, brandy and tobacco, had given her a headache. But just after writing: "Dearest Coleridge, forgive me for sending you a short and meagre letter," she felt that she could not lay down her pen until she had described for him a littleslip of the river above Rydal, unexpectedly beautiful, which William and she had seen in the morning, and she continued: "It is high up towards the moun-

tains where one would not have expected any trees to be; and down it tumbles among rocks and trees, trees of all shapes, elegant birches and ancient oaks, that have grown as tall as the storms would let them, and are now decaying away, their naked branches like shattered lances." She paused for a moment, trying to remember all the details that had pleased her. She wished so much to make him see the beauty on which she had looked. Then she added: "On one of them was an old glead's nest. With these are green hollies and junipers, a little waterfall, endless waterbreaks, now a rock starting forward, now an old tree, enough to look at for hours. . . . It is a miniature of all that can be conceived of savage and grand about a river . . ."

Still she lingered over her letter, and was going on with household news, when William, who was reading *Hamlet* at the table beside her, looked up and, seeing how tired she looked, begged her to stop.

For a fortnight after this she was at work morning, noon and night, trying to complete her copy of the poems for Coleridge before he left England. She was afraid she would not be in time with them, and the idea of this made him miserable, so she pressed on with the work, and the last batch of the poems reached him on March 24th, just a few days before he left London for Portsmouth. It was a great comfort to her, when she thought of his banishment and loneliness and the long distance he would be from them, to know that he had with him what he had desired so much. He had, however, another wish which she could not gratify. On April 4th he wrote to William: "I most eagerly long to have my beloved Dorothy's *Tour*." But the *Tour* had been at a standstill since the copying had been begun. Dorothy wished she had been more diligent in her writing in the early autumn.

Molly had been failing more and more during this busy time, and it was ever becoming more difficult to manage the housework with a servant who could give so little help. The problem of her future weighed heavily on them all. By the beginning of April it had solved itself. Aggy Fisher died, and Molly was promoted to be her brother's housekeeper and attendant upon his one cow.

This was the kind of work she could still do, and very proud she was of being mistress of a house. Dorothy began to look out for a young strong maid. In the meantime Sally Ashburner came in to help with the housework and the nursing of Johnny. All the Ashburners were admirers of Johnny. Peggy Ashburner, who had been the first to dress him, loved him as if she were his grandmother. Young Sally and Molly were never happier than when he smiled on them.

Coleridge sailed on April 9th on the *Speedwell*. He meant to stop at Gibraltar and touch at Malta, to see their friend Stoddart. Just before he sailed he had been ill, unhappy and uncertain. It had been impossible to know what he might or might not do. When the news came that he had gone, Dorothy felt as if a weight had dropped from her. The fluctuations of feeling, wearing to agony, were over. She had almost a sense of sudden freedom, and yet at the same moment a feeling of deadness, as if life itself had stopped, leaving only the mechanism of living. Coleridge pressed heavily, yet always when he went it was as if something of life had been cut away, as the result of the release from the beloved intolerable pressure.

Just about the time of Coleridge's sailing, Tom and Sara Hutchinson were settling into a farm which they had taken near Ullswater. Tom had had to leave Gallow Hill because of a selfish caprice of his landlord, Mrs. Langley. He had made the place so beautiful that Mrs. Langley had taken a fancy to it and, thinking the charming garden with its old-fashioned flowers would be a pleasant place for her guests in the summer, had given him notice to leave. Both Tom and Sara were much cast down over the injustice of this, making them feel as if all their fortune were insecure. The farm they had taken had once been Johnny Armstrong's. The farmhouse stood high and white on a hill above Dalemmain. Neither the farm nor the house, which was cold and exposed, was quite what they wanted, but they were glad to be so near Grasmere, and to be neighbours of the Clarksons, who, however, were beginning to talk of leaving the North

and of selling Eusemere, as it was becoming more and more evident that Mrs. Clarkson could not stand the climate of the mountains.

On the first Sunday in April Dorothy went to the new farm to see Tom and Sara and to help Sara to get the farmhouse into order. She had spent the whole of the Saturday with William in crossing Grisedale Hawes to Ullswater, where they spent the night with the Luffs, now settled at Glenridding House. On the Sunday morning she parted at Airey Force from William, who went on to Keswick, while she continued on her way to Park House. The sun was warm; the fields were a vivid green; everywhere life was renewing itself. Dorothy arrived just as Tom and Sara were returning from Dacre church. On the Monday she went with Sara to Penrith, where they bought many necessities for the house. On the Tuesday she walked over to Eusemere with Sara, for she wanted to be able to tell Mrs. Clarkson how things were looking. The walk was delightful, over Dacre Beck by the stepping-stones, through the fields and by Dun Mallet. Dorothy wished Mrs. Clarkson could have heard the many thrushes singing all the way, and seen the thousand thousand primroses under the trees. When they got to Eusemere, they found that Ellen, Mrs. Clarkson's maid, had gone to the market at Penrith, so they strolled about the garden for about half an hour, and as the afternoon was fine they sat down for a time on the grass. Dorothy looked about her with interest, for she wanted to give a full report to Mrs. Clarkson, who could never hear too much about Eusemere. She was glad to see the kitchen garden in good order, the peas and beans coming up, and Mrs. Clarkson's favourite speckled hens pecking about on the grass. The trees looked as if they would live, but they had not grown very much, and were still puny compared to the sheltered trees of Grasmere.

When Ellen arrived she was delighted to see her visitors. She had been to Penrith for some tow to spin for kitchen towels, and for a couple of leeches which she had brought back in a bottle and with which she was going to bleed herself. She set out a nice tea with home-made bread by the kitchen fire. Afterwards Dorothy and Sara went upstairs and looked out of the drawing-room

windows. As always, Dorothy was struck by the view as if it were an unearthly sight, a scene of heavenly splendour.

The next day Sara and she were busy putting up the beds, and doing many little things that were necessary to make the house comfortable. Dorothy stayed till May 16th, the Wednesday before Whitsuntide. Then she returned to Grasmere because there was extra work to do at the cottage. Mary had engaged a new maid, Mary Dawson, a little girl of about fifteen years old, who had never before left her home in St. John's Vale, and Dorothy wished to put things in perfect order before the arrival of this child. She found that she had been much missed during her absence. The work of the house had fallen into arrears, and Mary, having no one to help her but little Sally Ashburner, had been overworked, and was looking thin and tired. It was clear that she needed a holiday, and they decided that as soon as Park House was thoroughly comfortable William and she would go there for a change.

Dorothy was delighted on her return to see how well old Molly was looking. She thought Molly's promotion was a third life to her. And Molly was so proud and happy that it was a joy to see her. She had transfigured John Fisher's cottage, which in Aggy's time had been the dirtiest in Grasmere, and had made it so clean and shining that the neighbours stared at it in wonder. Her special pride was her one cow. She would talk eagerly of all she meant to do with the milk, of the butter she would churn, of the cheeses she would make.

The beginning of June was very wet. One rainy afternoon they all went to tea in Molly's cottage. Molly was aglow with pride. She had prepared both tea and coffee, and great piles of toast. Her hospitality to poor little Johnny was excessive. She overloaded his stomach with cream porridge, all of which he lapped up most greedily, like a hungry kitten.

When the weather was again fair, William took Mary and Johnny to Park House, meaning to leave them at the farm for some time, and to return himself to Grasmere at the end of a week or ten days. Dorothy had only one regret. She felt sure Johnny would take his first steps while he was away, and she could not

help feeling sorry that she would not be able to see him. She felt unbelievably lonely in the cottage while he was away. Everything seemed quiet and dull.

Dorothy had not as many visitors now, when she was left alone, as in earlier years. The Luffs were not well; the Lloyds, who had gone to live at Brathay, came seldom, although Priscilla Lloyd, whose marriage with Christopher was to take place in the autumn, was spending part of the summer with her brother; the Sympsons had not called much since the beginning of the year. Old Mrs. Sympson fretted from morning till night about her daughter, who was expecting a baby in the course of the month, and who already suffered severely and had completely lost her voice.

Dorothy's most frequent visitor was Molly Fisher, who came to the cottage almost every day with her old briskness of step and a kind of joyous stir about her, almost always bearing some gift or other, a print of butter, a bowl of curds, or a basin of gooseberries.

Mrs. Ibbetson's baby, a little girl, remarkably small and very quiet, was born in the middle of the month. Dorothy was unspeakably glad, for the poor mother had been tortured by dreadful labour pains for about three weeks. Dorothy was touched by the air of helplessness, the curious stillness of the child, a little waxen thing who seemed to have no strength. She was touched, too, by the weakness of the mother, who was quite spent by the cruel struggle to give birth to the frail life lying so quietly beside her.

Mary's holiday at Park House was somewhat spoiled by rheumatism, troublesome and disheartening although not particularly painful, and hampering her in her movements just when she wanted to enjoy the walks in the neighbourhood of Park House and Eusemere—but Johnny enjoyed himself thoroughly at the farm. He had learned to walk, and amused himself by running after the hens and all living things, calling "Da-Da-Da," his attempt at Dash, the name of the dog. When he came back he was a little spoiled and cross; he missed the bustle of the farm, his many nurses, and his friend Dash. He grew in strength from day to day. One day in the middle of July Dorothy was called from her writing to watch him climbing the series of steps which William

and John Fisher had cut in the orchard. He went all the way from the new glass door to the very top of the steps, entirely without help, with great caution but with no fear at all. Mary and Dorothy followed close upon his heels. Looking at him in his strength, and at Mary beaming with pride and joy, Dorothy felt a pang for Mrs. Ibbetson, who had not recovered strength, and who was now wasting away; and for the pretty little frail creature, lying in almost perfect quietness, who had taken most of her mother's life ; and for poor old Mrs. Sympson, grieving her heart out about her daughter, and almost as helpless and frail as the babe. Mr. Sympson, like a strong old tree overshadowing these helpless ones, had a kind of pathos too.

When interrupted to watch Johnny's exploit, Dorothy was writing to Mrs. Clarkson, whose mother, Mrs. Buck, had just died. She could not help feeling that death had here come mercifully, for the old lady's days had been darkened by a brooding fear of a return of the paralytic attacks from which she had suffered some time before, and which might leave her to linger indefinitely, shattered in body and mind. This—Dorothy thought—was a fate compared to which death was a sweet deliverance.

On August 16th, Mary's second child was born. They had expected a daughter, and this time they were correct in their expectation. The baby was a gay little thing almost from the beginning. William worshipped her. Dorothy had thought when she saw him with Johnny on his knee that he made a very nice nurse. The little girl evidently thought so too, for if her father was within her sight she was never happy when out of his arms.

He lost no time in making her a lady of property by settling on her the Applethwaite estate.

Sara Hutchinson came the day after the confinement and stayed till the christening was over. Lady Beaumont was the god-mother; William named his daughter Dorothy. Miss Monkhouse and Mary Monkhouse came for the christening and stayed a week. Dorothy found the nursing of Mary and the baby, the care of Johnny and the entertaining of visitors in the small house too

heavy a task, and fatigue brought on one of her illnesses. Everything was twice as difficult as it would have been in a larger house. All sounds echoed through all the rooms, and sometimes Johnny's screaming, when he was in one of the rages he fell into if he thought himself neglected, added to the baby's crying, was almost unbearable.

They were growing tired of the inconveniences of the cottage, yet they were reluctant to look out for a larger house in Grasmere, because they wished to settle near Coleridge on his return, and it did not look as if he would be able to make his home in the North. Mr. Jackson, his landlord, had played him a shabby trick. He had sold Greta Hall, over the bottle, to a worthless fellow who had scandalized Keswick by bringing with him to the North his wife and a mistress in boy's clothes. Dorothy was grieved at the thought of Coleridge unable to return to his old books in their old book-case, looking to Skiddaw. She felt as if his study, his fireside, Newlands and Borrowdale, had all been taken from him in one blow.

Just about a month after the birth of the little Dorothy, on September 14th, Mrs. Ibbetson died. She was buried in Grasmere churchyard. Everybody pitied the parents. Mr. Sympson still bore himself bravely, but old Mrs. Sympson was quite broken. Dorothy, every time she passed the grave of the pleasant companion of her first Grasmere days, had many sad and questioning thoughts. Why the swift flame to end in darkness? Why the brief ecstasy of the blood to lead to a huddle of tortured days? Why the barter of a life for the strange, late flowering?

Truly Life drove a cruel trade.

In the beginning days of autumn Dorothy and Mary mended everything in the house that needed mending, and finished such sewing as was needed for the winter. By November Dorothy began to look forward to having some time for writing and study. William was even more in need of quiet. The assurance and inspiration he had felt in the spring, when constantly seeing Coleridge, had failed him. He had attempted to keep in touch with his writing throughout the bustle of the summer, but without very much success. His

thoughts had been on *The Recluse* and the *Poem to Coleridge*, but most of the verses he had composed had been fragments inspired by the things seen and heard from day to day. In the autumn the song of the redbreasts and the sight of the glow-worm shining on the hills seemed to reproach him for fitfulness of purpose. This feeling was so strong that it found expression in an outburst of verse, coming in with which one day he delighted Dorothy and Mary:

. . . I heard,
After the hour of sunset yester even,
Sitting within doors betwixt light and dark,
A voice that stirr'd me. 'Twas a little Band,
A Quire of Redbreasts gather'd somewhere near
My threshold, Minstrels from the distant woods
And dells, sent in by Winter to bespeak
For the Old Man a welcome, to announce,
With preparation artful and benign,
Yea the most gentle music of the year,
That their rough Lord had left the surly North
And hath begun his journey. A delight,
At this unthought of greeting, unawares
Smote me, a sweetness of the coming time,
And listening, I half whispered, 'We will be
Ye heartsome Choristers, ye and I will be
Brethren, and in the hearing of bleak winds
We'll chaunt together!' And, thereafter, walking
By later twilight on the hills, I saw
A Glow-worm from beneath a dusky shade
Or canopy of the yet unwithered fern,
Clear-shining, like a Hermit's taper seen
Through a thick forest ; silence touch'd me here
No less than sound had done before; the Child
Of Summer, lingering, shining by itself,
The voiceless Worm on the unfrequented hills,
Seem'd sent on the same errand with the Quire
Of Winter that had warbled at my door,

This outpouring was the prelude to steady work throughout the closing days of the year.

As Christmas drew near they all missed Coleridge very much.

It was strange to have no expectation of seeing him walk in, wind-blown, triumphant in his conquest over the gout, leading Hartley or Derwent, and over-filling the small rooms with life and affection and bustle. The year before he had been with them on Christmas Day. Now even conjecture as to his doings fell flat, for no news of him had come for some months.

They were disappointed too that John, who was in London, about to set out on a prosperous new voyage obtained for him by Mr. Wilberforce, was prevented by pressure of business from coming to see them before setting sail in the *Abergavenny*.

On the first day of the New Year George Hutchinson was with them. The whole family went out of doors, tempted by the bright sunshine and the clear keen day, and soon they were all enjoying themselves on the ice. William and George Hutchinson pushed along Mary and Dorothy, who held the children on their knees. They resolved, in the first flush of their energy and enjoyment, to leave Grasmere for a few days. Wednesday morning was delightful, and they set out in the Irish car for Park House. The children were none the worse for the jaunt, but Dorothy, who carried the baby over the Kirkstone Pass in her arms, got heated and fatigued, and caught a bad cold, and Mary had toothache before she reached Park House. They both blamed William for this. Being afraid of their being out too late with the children, he hurried them up the hill at a pace beyond their strength.

At Park House there was a very happy party. Hartley was there, and was allowed to sit up and enjoy himself in conversation with the grown-ups after the babies were put to bed. On the Sunday evening he was sitting by the fire at about seven o'clock with Mary and her sisters, Sara and Joanna—Tom and George Hutchinson, and William. Dorothy was sitting apart from the group, for she was writing a hurried note to Mrs. Clarkson while the man who was to take the letter to the post waited at the door. When she had finished she glanced at Hartley, sitting with the quaintest air of a little man, by the men beside the fire, and suddenly she thought, how like a flash the year had gone, and how

great a part in it the children had played. Children's cries and children's caresses and children's voices and children's needs had been the wings on which the days had flown.

She loved them all—strange Hartley and fat, affectionate Derwent, and the beautiful and tiny Sally, almost too quiet and meek, and lively baby Dorothy, her father's pet from her first moment of life. But more than all, passionately, tenderly, she loved Johnny, William's first-born son. Johnny, ever since his birth, had filled her heart. She hardly knew which of her many memories of him were most dear—Johnny in his bath, sobbing bitterly, with a kind of melancholy dignity, like a little man, morning and evening; Johnny in the tempestuous angers and pathetic protests of the ex-baby jealous of his rival; Johnny in his sudden transports of love. There were moments when the child satisfied her completely. One of the first words he learned to say was "Happy," and he would chant this word as he went from room to room. Dorothy and Mary loved to hear it. It was frequently Johnny's first word in the morning. And sometimes, in the stillness of the night, he would say "Happy," and put his strong little arms round Dorothy's neck, dropping asleep again in the same instant.

Not all the drowsy syrops of the world could medicine thus sweetly the disquietudes of body and soul!



CHAPTER III

Oh this strange, strange, strange scene-shifter Death!

COLERIDGE.

DOROTHY found it increasingly difficult to keep any time free for herself. On the evening of the second Sunday in February she looked remorsefully at a letter from Mrs. Clarkson, dated December 10th, to which she had not yet fully replied. She felt all the more self-reproachful because the Clarksons had given up their beautiful home in the North. Eusemere had been sold to Lord Lowther.

William was at work; Mary was putting baby Dorothy to bed in the parlour; Dorothy thought she would have time at last to write a letter worth the postage: but she had hardly begun when Johnny came trotting into the room crying "Anny! Anny!" and carrying in his hand a basket with thread in it with which he wanted her to sew him a plaister on a burnt arm. Then he wanted to be "up o' knee." When he had gone, Dorothy turned again to her letter. She told Mrs. Clarkson how the village people still remembered her and asked for her—Peggy Ashburner always made sympathetic inquiries; old Molly often spoke of Mrs. Clarkson and "lile Tommy"; she hoped both Tommy and his mother would come to Grasmere in the summer: it seemed so strange that the children had not yet seen either of them. Then she gave the news of the family and the district—the children were thriving; the little Dorothy was a very pretty baby, prettier than Johnny had been, but without his nobility of expression; Johnny had cut sixteen teeth and was about to cut some more, which made him rather an irritable bedfellow; William went on regularly with his poem; John had written them from Portsmouth in great spirits just before sailing to Bengal on the first of the month; Mrs. Coleridge had been much vexed with her maid, Mary Stamper, who had been most inconsiderate, going to church to be married with-

out saying a word to her mistress and coming the next day for her wages, although she knew Mrs. Coleridge was preparing for a journey, and had intended leaving the children to her care; Sara Hutchinson was at Kendal with an old school friend; Priscilla and Christopher seemed to be very happy in their marriage; the chief news from the village was that Mr. Crump, a Liverpool attorney, was going to build a house in the face of all the vale, above the church; it was felt almost as a public sorrow that the beauty of the valley should be blotted in this way.

Dorothy had almost succeeded in finishing her letter before she was interrupted, again by Johnny, who was brought into the room in Sally Ashburner's arms to kiss her good-night. He went off to bed in high good-humour, calling out at the top of his voice: "Ta-Ta!" Dorothy was smiling at the noise he made as she folded her letter. Somehow the children's happiness gave her a sense of security. If only she knew that Coleridge were well, she would feel that all she loved were cradled in safety.

The next day this sense of security and peace was shattered for ever. At two o'clock the letters and papers arrived. These contained the dreadful news that the *Abergavenny* was lying at the bottom of the sea. She had struck on The Shambles of the Bill of Portland the previous Tuesday, and John, dear brave sanguine John, who was to have made such a prosperous voyage, had perished with many of his crew.

They were all aghast, incredulous, shaken as children. This was the sharpest sorrow they had ever known. Dazed, broken and confused, they sat through the dreadful afternoon, hardly able to realize what had happened to them since the bright safe morning. They were bewildered by the shock of the unlooked-for calamity, as if in a bad dream. How could it be true? How could they have been enjoying on the Tuesday the quiet evening hours after the children had gone to bed, at the very moment when John was in mortal peril of mind and body! How could they have gone about their work happily in the following days, when John was lying at the bottom of the sea, rocked by the blind waves and surges! How had the passing of this beloved spirit made no ripple in their lives? Had spirit no intercourse with spirit that they had been

deaf to a beloved brother's cry? Life had mocked at them, at their quiet goings-out and comings-in, their puny faiths and securities. Dorothy sat weeping in the twilight in a broken-hearted way as she thought of these cruel mysteries. William, though almost as stricken, tried to comfort her. In their grief and terror their thoughts turned to Coleridge, whose sorrow, they knew, would be intense. They feared the effect of the shock both on his mind and his poor body, so little fitted to bear the assaults of grief.

Gradually they realized the details of the wreck. The ship had struck early in the afternoon. She sank at about eleven o'clock, in twelve fathoms of water, after many hours' desperate pumping in the hope that she could be kept up until run aground on Weymouth Sands. Even after hearing these things they could still hardly realize that John was no more. Their thoughts were centred in him. They could look at nothing which did not remind them of him. The fir grove above the cottage was still marked by the passing of his feet. It seemed to Dorothy that it was but yesterday he had gone out among the hills with his fishing rod, or walked with her, pointing out this or that which she would not otherwise have observed, for he was a close and delicate observer, a poet in all but words, and a lover of all quiet sweet things. Dorothy could still hear the tones of his voice as he called her out of the cottage to look at the moon or the stars, or the beauty of a stormy sky. Moon, sky and stars were his chief delight. They were his companions at sea, and he was never tired of the thoughts they bred in him in the silence of the night. He was always greatly moved by the strange glory of the moon climbing the heavens.

The fireside too reminded them of him. He had been practical and contriving in the early days when they were very poor, and all that his kind clever hands had done remained to speak for him. He had been interested in all the little contrivances of the cottage. And the garden spoke of his care. Trees were growing in it of his planting.

He had always liked to do things perfectly. Even in little things he sought perfection. Nothing had annoyed him so much as to see anything done in an awkward way.

Dorothy was moved by the memory of his unselfishness. Even as a boy he had been unselfish. While yet at school he had wished William to have most of the available money, saying that for himself £200 would be sufficient. Afterwards his dearest wish had been to make his fortune at sea, so that William could devote his life to poetry. Unconsciously Dorothy had leant on him. She felt bewildered at the thought that he was no more.

She felt a pang of remorse every time she thought how little she had been able to do to reward this unselfishness. To William she had always given all she had to give. But for John she had been able to do so little. It half broke her heart that she had been able to do so little. It seemed to her that he had been cheated out of the full knowledge of her love. She had never had a home for him until they came to Grasmere, and even then she had been too poor to be lavish to him. During the easier years that followed William's marriage he had never been able to come. Never to have held Johnny in his arms, never to have kissed little Dorothy, never to have looked upon the trees he had planted, nor the brooms that had become a wonder to see, never to have talked with them in the moss hut they had built at the top of the orchard with many thoughts of the hours he would spend in it—these were desolate things. John was gone almost before they had built their home securely. He had been too quick for them. He had gone before they had given him of their best, before Life had given him of its best. "Dead! dead ere his prime!" was the constant cry of her heart.

An element of torture was added to their sorrow by the careless comments of the world. The newspaper accounts of the wreck had some suggestion of criticism of the captain. They stated that the ship had struck an hour and a half before guns were fired, and that in the agony of the moment the boats had been forgotten and had not been hoisted out. What pierced most of all was the suggestion that the captain, overwhelmed by the situation, had made no effort to save himself. Was this possible? Had John been so overwhelmed by calamity that he had not wished to live?

William wrote to Charles Lamb, begging him to find out all he

could about the wreck. Charles's letters were of the greatest comfort to him. The first of them which William received did not deny the report that just before the going down of the vessel John had seemed "like one overwhelmed with the situation, and careless of his own safety," but added: "Perhaps he might have saved himself, but a Captain who in such circumstances does all he can for his ship and nothing for himself is the noblest idea." In another letter Charles told of conversations with Stewart, the second mate, who however could give little information, and with Gilpin, the fourth mate, who had seen the captain after the ship went down, and said that, though overwhelmed by the waves and half dead, he had been trying to save himself. This was a very precious assurance to them all. Charles also told them of the investigation of the causes of the loss of the ship held at the East India House, in which it had been shown that everything possible had been done to save the ship, and that the disaster had been caused by the incompetency of the pilot.

Still William hungered for information. He got Charles to question Gilpin about various details, but could not get any definite answer to the one he most wished answered. Gilpin had said that the captain had been trying to save himself at the last. But what had John been doing at an earlier moment of the wreck? Had he made the most of his opportunities of saving himself? To the question: "Was Captain Wordsworth standing near the shrouds or in any place of safety at the moment of sinking?" Charles could only get the reply: "Your . . . question I cannot answer, as I did not see Capt. Wordsworth at the moment the ship was going down."

This he sent them, and with this they had to rest.

John's body was found on March 20th, lying by the side of the ship. It was buried in Wyke churchyard on the 21st. Dorothy and William found some kind of comfort in knowing that John was laid to rest in the earth, which would one day receive them too, among quiet things, in the neighbourhood of woods and fields and flowers and near the singing of birds, secure from the buffetings of the restless waters which had proved too strong.

The finding of the body gave some subtle relief to the pressure of feeling which was weighing them down. Dorothy began to try to master her grief. Yet she was sorely shaken. Were it not for the children and their needs she would have sunk into apathy. The beauty of the valley and the mountains had for the moment no power to heal. She hardly stirred outside. It hurt her to look upon the garden she had made with poor John's help. For three months she could hardly bear to walk to the top of the orchard, where the summer shed had been built. She wrestled with this feeling, but it was slow to pass.

As the spring advanced, some measure of healing came to her. She summoned all her courage to her aid, partly to please William, who was making every effort to console and support her. After a time she was able to write to her friends, to Jane Marshall, to Mrs. Clarkson, to Mary Lamb, and to express some of the pride she felt in her lost brother, making her thankful to have even the memory of his life. Mary Lamb was instant to reply, with a letter exquisite in its sympathy:

Till I saw your own handwriting, I could not persuade myself that I should do well to write to you, though I have often attempted it, but I always left off dissatisfied with what I had written, and feeling that I was doing an improper thing to intrude upon your sorrow. I wished to tell you that you would one day feel the kind of peaceful state of mind, and sweet memory of the dead which you so happily describe as now almost begun, but I felt that it was improper, and most grating to the feelings of the afflicted, to say to them that the memory of their affliction would in time become a constant part not only of their "dream, but of their most wakeful kind of happiness." That you would see every object with, and through your lost brother, and that that would at last become a real and everlasting source of comfort to you, I felt, and well know from my own experience in sorrow, but till you yourself began to feel this I did not dare to tell you so, . . .

She enclosed in her letter some lines she had written when remembering the extraordinary sweetness with which Coleridge had supported Charles and herself in sorrows that had seemed hopeless. Dorothy, who had been feeling it most strange that

Coleridge should be as if blotted out from their lives when they were in such trouble, found the lines curiously comforting:

Wc

Why is he wandering on the sea?
Coleridge should now with Wordsworth be.
By slow degrees he'd steal away
Their woe, and gently bring a ray
(So happily he'd time relief)
Of comfort from their very grief.
He'd tell them that their brother dead
When years have passed o'er their head,
Will be remember'd with such holy,
True, and perfect melancholy
That ever their lost brother John
Will be their heart's companion.

Th

The children helped to drive gloom from the cottage. Johnny's little companions came about the house with the fine weather and filled the garden with their noise and laughter. Little Dorothy caught a touch of croup, and in nursing her mother and aunt forgot to brood.

William had from the first been fighting down his grief, but he was sore stricken. His sorrow seemed less passionate than Dorothy's, but it was even deeper. His memories of John went further back. Like Dorothy, he mourned for the dear companion of Grasmere days; like her he felt that one of the props of his daily life had been taken away—but it was the remembrance of days long past that shook him most. His love for John was deep as the roots of life. Memories of childhood and boyhood thronged about him—John's first coming to school, their expeditions together (many times John had been called a dunce because he preferred solitary dreaming, or wandering about with his fishing rod, to books), the fights into which John's passionate temper had led them, their goings home for the holidays, the sorrows they had shared. One memory was persistent, the memory of a day in Hawkshead at the end of the Christmas term of John's second year at school, when John and Richard and he were much excited because they were waiting for the horses that were to take them

to Cockermouth to spend the Christmas holidays with their father. The horses had come and they had gone home, but within ten days their father had died, and Richard, John and he had followed the body to the grave. The memories of the wild and stormy day on which they had waited in Hawkshead, careless of the rough weather, were as clear as if not a week had passed. He could see the crag which he had climbed in his impatience that he could overlook each of the ways by which the horses might come, the naked wall which sheltered him from the wind, the single sheep nibbling at his right hand, the hawthorn on his left; he could hear as if it were yesterday the rustling of the wind in the grass, filling him with a curious excitement.

He could see again John, such a little fellow, walking by his side on the day of the funeral, in the wind and snow.

These memories possessed him, making him indifferent to the doings of the world. He felt a kind of numbness settling about his heart. He confessed to Sir George Beaumont that many of the doings of the day, about which others got excited, seemed to him a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. At the same time, little things, unnoticed by others, and unvalued, spoke to him as if charged with some message for him, and to their low voices he listened intently. Looking one day at a daisy, he felt that the flower, reappearing upon the earth, had come to his aid like a symbol of immortality. He put his feeling into halting words intended only for himself:

Sweet Flower! belike one day to have
A place upon thy Poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more:
But He, who was on land, at sea,
My Brother, too, in loving thee,
Although he loved more silently,
Sleeps by his native shore.

Unlike Dorothy, he found comfort during his heaviest grief in walking where he had walked with John, and in thinking of all they had said to each other. One day near Grisedale Hawes, just at the place where he had parted with John, he noted the modest

grace of the Moss Campion, a flower of which John had been very fond. For a moment he was pierced by the thought that John would never any more look upon it

With multitude of purple eyes,
Spangling a cushion green like moss;

The pang of feeling was followed, however, by an almost instant sense that the flower was speaking to him in its way, offering not the sword of memory, but peace. He tried to put this also into words:

Even here I feel it, even this Plant
Is in its beauty ministrant
To comfort and to peace.

In these walks and in putting into verse some of the self-communings with which he did not wish to disturb Mary and Dorothy, he found relief from the sadness which oppressed him.

He found relief, too, in work. Yet all his thoughts of work were interpenetrated with thoughts of John. John had loved his poems, had made of them dear companions, had believed in them. John would fain have been his bread-winner, so that he should be free for writing. There had been an unspoken pledge between them. Now that John was dead, the pledge was more than ever binding. The first impulse of William's love and grief, and a pride purged and refined almost to exaltation by the careless criticisms which had been made of so brave a brother, had been to write a poem in memory of John. The words came surging, tumultuous, only to be lost because of their impetuosity. He could not hold a pen in his hand at the time; he could not lay upon Dorothy or Mary the burden of writing out for him the lines that might quicken their sorrow; and he could not retain the long batches of unwritten lines in his memory. And so the poem in memory of John was lost. But some of the feeling which had been in it passed into the last book of the *Poem to Coleridge*, which was progressing steadily. When this poem, on which he had been engaged since the spring of 1799, was at last finished, in the second half of May, William felt little pleasure at the completion of his long task, but rather a

great sadness and a thousand vain fancies and dreams. He had written scarcely a line of the earlier part of the poem without hoping that it would give pleasure to John.

Friends did all they could to soften the blow of the sudden bereavement. Sara Hutchinson came in April and spent the greater part of the month at Grasmere. The Clarksons began to speak of coming in the summer. In the beginning of April Dorothy wrote to tell Mrs. Clarkson that Robert Newton was willing to let his nice little cottage by the church for three or four months. The cottage had two bedrooms, a kitchen and pantry and a parlour, and the garden, which was the old soldier's hobby, had plenty of gooseberries in it. Mrs. Newton was ready to supply milk and butter. Dorothy was eager that Mrs. Clarkson should take the house, but as yet Dr. Beddoes had not given permission for so long a journey.

She also invited Charles and Mary Lamb to spend part of the summer at Grasmere. She would greatly have liked to see them both, but the visit had to be given up. Charles wrote to her on June 14th, in great dejection, to say that Mary, who had been attacked by one of her illnesses, was at present "from home." He blamed himself partly for this, for he had been drinking too much, and this, he knew, worried Mary, though she never reproached him. Dorothy read his words, many times, with intense sympathy:

I am sure that for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I am now calm, but sadly taken down, and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary; but I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me, and I miss a prop. . . . She is older, and wiser, and better, than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me. And I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed drinking and ways of going on. But even in this up-braiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade.

In June Dr. Beddoes, while not actually encouraging Mrs. Clarkson to travel, did not positively forbid the journey. Robert Newton's house was still available, and Dorothy urged Mrs. Clarkson to take it, for she realized that Dove Cottage, noisy and overcrowded, would not be sufficiently restful for an invalid, and that her own bedroom, which Mrs. Clarkson would have to share if she came to the cottage, might be noisy at times, because Johnny, who was her companion at nights, was sometimes a restless bed-fellow. The Clarksons were glad to be able to rent the cottage by the church, which they thought would suit them nicely for a short time. They arrived in July. Dorothy's pleasure on seeing them was only spoiled by her sorrow at finding Mrs. Clarkson still so far from well.

Mr. Clarkson, who was busy as usual collecting material for one of his books, was in Scotland part of the time. When he was in Grasmere he saw many visitors, whom he entertained at the inn.

On fine days Mrs. Clarkson usually walked to Dove Cottage, although even that slow, short walk left her looking worn and pale. She liked, after she had rested, to talk to Dorothy and Mary, or to listen to William reading the poetry he had written after their last meeting. The children were fond of her and would play about her. The baby was her "little darling lass." Johnny appreciated her cakes very much, and was quick to compare them with those old Molly gave him. "Mrs. Clarkson's cakes have currants in them, but Molly's cakes have no currants," he remarked one day. Poor Molly! Before Mrs. Clarkson's visit was over she was not able to make him even cakes without currants, for her cow died, to her great grief, and she no longer had any butter with which to make little cakes for the children, or nice fresh prints to carry to "Mistress."

Johnny was also great friends with Mrs. Clarkson's maid Susan, who made him a pair of tiny blue garments which he called his "Breeches," a new jacket and a "Pocket," to which he was much attached. He went about telling people: "My Susan made it me."

On the colder days Dorothy would take Johnny and his sister to Robert Newton's cottage, and Mrs. Clarkson and she would talk while Johnny played with the baby.

The days went by very quickly, their even succession interrupted now and again only by passing visitors. Mrs. William Threlkeld of Halifax and her daughter Elizabeth, who were visiting the lakes, spent a few days at the cottage. Dorothy took Mrs. Threlkeld to have tea with Mrs. Clarkson at Robert Newton's. Mrs. Threlkeld was completely captivated by Mrs. Clarkson's charm, which had been accentuated rather than diminished by her delicate fragile look. She told Dorothy afterwards that she had never in her life seen any human being whom she admired or loved half so much in such a short time.

In August Mr. and Mrs. Scott were at Keswick on their way to Gilsland. William walked over to Keswick to see them, and spent a couple of days with Scott. He returned over Helvellyn, bringing with him not only Walter Scott but Humphry Davy. The three men had a splendid day. Scott's liveliness had charmed the others. The next day the visitors were taken for an expedition to Windermere and spent the day on the lake. Davy, who was on his way South, parted from the others at Bowness.

William took Walter Scott to see the beauties of Ullswater, and they spent the night at Patterdale. Mary and Dorothy were amused when he told them on his return of Scott's mad spirits. The inn had been so full that they could only get a bed in a sitting-room, after it had been vacated by four ladies who were there. The ladies seemed determined to make a night of it. William and Walter Scott, walking up and down outside, tired after the long day in the open air and a little cold, even in the summer night, and feeling as if they were shut out from Elysium, could hear their talk and laughter going on endlessly, as it seemed. At last Scott would no longer be restrained. Laughing till the tears blinded his eyes, he started, as each hour and half-hour struck in the inn, to chant out the time like a London watchman. "Eleven o'clock; half-past eleven; twelve o'clock," produced no effect. It was not till he had called out: "Half-past twelve," that the ladies yielded their citadel.

The Clarksons left at the beginning of November. Dorothy missed very much the pleasant affectionate companionship which

had meant a great deal to her. She seldom passed through the churchyard without looking at the white window-curtains of the room which had been Mrs. Clarkson's, or at the windows propped half open, and wishing her friends were back. One day she went into the parlour, but it had somehow lost the cosy, intimate look it had had when Susan had looked after it and made it comfortable for her mistress.

The Wednesday after the Clarksons left, William and Dorothy set out together to wander at their pleasure through Patterdale. William had been wishing since the early spring to take his family away for a holiday, but the time had passed, and now all that could be managed before the end of the year was this short expedition. Dorothy and he set out, Dorothy upon the pony, riding slowly, William walking beside her, on a damp and gloomy morning, when the mist was gathering over the valleys and the rain was falling on Dorothy's habit, but so fine that the drops were no larger than the smallest pearls in a lady's ring. The trees on Rydal island were of the most gorgeous colours and the whole island was reflected in the lake. The day suited Dorothy's mood; as the mists became heavier her enjoyment quickened to something like happiness. She loved the transfiguring power of these mists. It delighted her to see the way in which they altered to beauty things not usually beautiful. A fragment of a ruined wall at the top of Kirkstone, suddenly magnified by the mist and made meaningful, gave her peculiar pleasure. The fields of Hartsop, so coloured by the reflection of the yellow clouds as to look like the glancing waters of a lake, also delighted her. The lake itself was of a grey steely brightness.

They spent the night at Glenridding with the Luffs. The next day they walked to Bleawick, admiring as they walked the exquisite beauty of the woods opposite. The lemon-coloured trees crowded together in the highest parts of the woods seemed to Dorothy like masses of clouds in the West, tinged with the golden light of the sun. Place Fell looked steady and bold like a lion. William had come here partly on business. There was a cottage under Place Fell with a small estate, for sale. The situation was beautiful and

they thought they might perhaps set up a home on the shores of fair Ullswater. When they got to the house they found that everywhere, beautiful as the little estate was, there was an appearance of neglect and decay. The cottage would require to have from two to three hundred pounds spent on it before it would be fit for their use. The owner, whom they found working in the barn, wanted £1000 for the place, which they both thought too much.

They returned to Glenridding along with Captain Luff, who had accompanied them on their day's walk. The Luffs had their home in a most beautiful place. That night Dorothy marvelled at the beauty on which she looked. Long before she could see the face of the moon, the Eastern hills were in the blackest shade, while those on the opposite side had the brightness of snow. When the moon had climbed up to the middle of the sky, the whole vale was filled with white light.

The following day they crossed the lake, landing at Sandwick, and walked up the vale. At the last house they came upon the master of the house smearing a flock of sheep with tar. The hospitable mistress gave them oat-cakes new and crisp, which they greatly enjoyed, before they set out on the return walk to Glenridding.

On the Saturday they heard the news of Nelson's victory and death, quickening their memories of their own sorrow. It jarred upon their mood to hear that the bells at Penrith had been ringing to celebrate triumph won at such a cost.

They set out for Park House in brilliant sunshine after the sharp frost of the night, sunshine so bright that it obscured the outlines of things even more than the mists would have done. The lemon-coloured leaves of the birches were flashing like diamonds in the sun.

After spending the Sunday at Park House, they went on the Monday to see Thomas Wilkinson. Crossing the ford at Yanwath, they found Thomas at work in the fields, but very ready to lay down his spade and accompany them to some of the haunts of their youth. Leaving their horses at the mill below Brougham, they walked through the woods, a marvellously beautiful walk,

until they came to a quarry which had been the boundary of some of the happiest walks of Dorothy's girlhood. Dorothy felt, when she saw it, some of the careless happiness of these early evening walks springing up in her heart. The sun was not shining, and it was mid-day, yet so vividly did she recall other times that she seemed to see on the trees the rich sunlight which had fallen on them in the evenings, many years before.

Thomas told William that the ladies whom Walter Scott had serenaded at Patterdale were his friends, Bessy and Kitty Smith from Coniston, accompanied by Mary Dixon and a friend of hers from Scotland. It had been a very curious chance, for Mary Dixon was at the moment on her way to Scotland with a letter of introduction to Walter Scott, and she had thus missed him, or all of him except his voice, though spending the night under the same roof.

William told Thomas Wilkinson about his expedition to Place Fell, and said that he thought £1000 was an exorbitant price for the little estate. He thought it was only worth about £700; and that it would be ridiculous to give a farthing more than £800 for it. But the beauty of the place had caught at his heart. He wished that Thomas would try to bargain for him with the owner.

They dined at the house of Thomas's brother-in-law, Richard Bowman, where they were welcomed and waited upon by Thomas's sister, the greater Hannah, and by his much-loved niece, "Lile" Hannah, as he called her. "Lile" Hannah was just about nine years old, but she was already a helpful, serviceable little maiden.

On the Tuesday they returned home. The morning had been wet, and they waited until three o'clock before starting out from Park House. The sun came out before they reached Ullswater, and they had a delightful afternoon. Gowbarrow Park, alight with colour, was no whit less beautiful than in spring, for the leafless hawthorns were adorned with their own red berries and with arches of green brambles. The birches still had their full foliage, but coloured a bright yellow, the eglantine was hung with glossy hips, the alders were most of them green as in spring.

Dorothy was admiring very much a troop of deer standing among the fern, when a chance companion of the wayside, disturbing the herd with a whistle, startled her as with a sense of some discourtesy offered to the ancient inhabitants of the country, whose grave simplicity and thoughtful enjoyment had been entirely in keeping with the solemn beauty of the closing day.

After having tea at Glenridding they set out again. The lake in the fading twilight was at first more brilliant than in the daytime, and all the stars seemed brighter than usual. The night drew on with increasing majesty; the steeps above Brothers' Water seemed like some enormous perpendicular walls; Kirkstone was solemn with the roaring of swollen torrents; the stars appeared to take their stations in turn along the mountain tops. These impressions sank deep into Dorothy's mind. At the moment their stately succession had in it an almost hypnotic power.

It was nearly midnight before they reached home.

During the third week in November Dorothy had a very sharp attack of illness. On the Monday she had a slight pain in the left side, which became very bad on the Tuesday. Mr. Sympson, the apothecary, was sent for from Ambleside, and bled her, but this gave no relief, and she felt so weak afterwards that she was unable to turn in bed and had to lie continually on her back. A large blister applied to the side gave some relief, and in a few days she was up again, although feeling rather weak and shaken, for the pain had been severe. On the Sunday, just as she was feeling convalescent, John Hutchinson arrived from Stockton, on his way to Park House, and Mary, who was looking thin and who needed a holiday, took the opportunity of going with him on the Monday. Dorothy was glad she was sufficiently recovered for Mary to feel free to go.

Mary meant to stay at Park House for a fortnight, but the fortnight lengthened into weeks, until Dorothy began to notice that little Dorothy, who at first would look up in her bright interested way when "mother" was mentioned, was beginning to forget. Johnny remembered his mother, but chiefly connected the thought of her with the things he hoped she would bring home. Dorothy

felt sure that his first greeting would be: "Have you brought me some pictures, or some pears, or some snaps?"

On the eve of St. Thomas's Day, old Molly walked into the kitchen at five o'clock, in a kind of joyous bustle, and shook hands with Dorothy in her brisk way. Dorothy had not forgotten the day, which was the sixth anniversary of their coming to Grasmere. She was much pleased to see Molly come in, just at the very hour on which they had arrived. "Aye, Mistress," said Molly earnestly, "I never forget t'laal striped gown and t'laal straw Bonnet, as ye stood here."

The day happened, like the day of that first arrival, to be a Friday. Dorothy could see as if it were yesterday the dark chimney and the handful of reddish cinders which had welcomed them.

She was kept busy enough during the weeks in which Mary was away, for little Dorothy was now and again fretful with teething; and washings, constant mendings and sewings, and preparations for Christmas kept the days full. Out of one of William's coats she made a coat in which little Dorothy, spirited and independent, trotted about all day, even going up and down stairs by herself, with much pride. She went out riding or walking with William when the weather was fine. And when any free time was left, she used it for transcribing some of the *Poem to Coleridge*.

Five books of the Poem, in the same bag as a third part of the manuscript of the Recollections of the tour in Scotland, were sent to Park House, to be transcribed in leisure moments by Mary as a gift to Coleridge on his return. The manuscripts were stolen by the way, to the great vexation of Dorothy, who had a copy of the verse but who had no other copy of the *Tour*. John Fletcher, in whose charge they had been, vowed in his anger that he would go to the Wise Man beyond Carlisle to find out the thieves. This man, who had been born deaf and dumb, had some uncanny gift more than making up for the deficiencies of his bodily organs, and his fame had spread far and wide in the country.

There was another robbery about this time, which moved

Dorothy's indignation more than the loss of the poems and the account of the tour. A poor woman, who washed throughout the year for the Bishop of Llandaff's family, had just received nine guineas which the bishop owed her, and was returning home in a cart when she was attacked by two men, one of whom bound her while the other cut off her pockets. All this was done in complete silence. Everyone felt that the assailants must have been neighbours who knew the woman well enough to guess her errand, and that they kept silence to avoid detection. The incident made a disagreeable impression in the neighbourhood. It looked as if the poor were robbing the poor.

Dorothy felt that there was something very piteous about this robbery.

Christmas was upon them before Mary's return. The 24th had been fine and crisp, but Christmas Day was a day of continual rain. After seeing little Dorothy nicely settled with Hannah Lewthwaite, and Johnny provided with amusement in the kitchen, Dorothy sat down to write to Mrs. Clarkson. The day for her was one of retrospect. She wrote: "Perhaps you may remember that this is my Birthday. This day I have completed my 34th year." Her thoughts turned to John, who had been safe in London on Christmas Day of the preceding year, and she continued: "Poor John was in London last Christmas, all his heart set upon the accomplishment of that fatal voyage, as the termination of his Labours—and so it proved, and to him a happy and glorious termination of them—to us only sorrow and pain. But my heart fills fast, and I shall betray myself into tears and grief, and give you pain also." She turned away from these sad thoughts to think of the years spent in Grasmere. "They seem as if they would bear looking back upon better than any other," she wrote, but added, with a sudden memory of the days when all the world was fresh and young, "though my heart flutters and aches striving to call to mind more perfectly the remembrance of some of the more thoughtless pleasures of former years."

A loud outcry from the road interrupted her thoughts. She went outside to find Johnny, looking unbelievably pathetic, walk-

ing along slowly in his greatcoat with his black cap half over a dirty face, sobbing bitterly and crying: "Is Mary Fisher my wife? Is Mary Fisher my wife?"

"Yes, my dear, she's your wife, you know, but she's not at home."

"Then," said he, still crying, "let us go and seek her."

Johnny had slipped out of the kitchen and had been standing in the rain outside old Molly's door for about ten minutes, pleading to be admitted. He would not be pacified until Dorothy had taken him to see the door and shown him that the cottage was empty.

She returned to her writing and was just sending her love to Tommy Clarkson when there came a fretful cry from upstairs. Little Dorothy wanted to be amused. She had to be taken downstairs, where she insisted upon helping "Aty" by holding the pen in her tiny fingers to trace the words "Tommy's kiss," which she then kissed to complete her task.

Towards dinner-time, Johnny, quite forgetful of his morning's discomfiture, was playing about in the kitchen, all alive at the thought of two plumb-puddings rumbling in the pot and a sirloin of beef smoking at the fire. Presently old Molly and John Fisher arrived, and he drew their attention to this exciting fare. When dinner was ready these two guests were taken up to the sitting-room. Old Molly's face was wrinkled deep with smiles, but it was not so much anticipation of the Christmas dinner that was making her happy. Far more to her was the thought of sitting down at a festive board once more presided over by "Mistress" and graced by the presence of "Johnny and all."



CHAPTER IV

I am whispering to a dead friend.

“THE DEVIL’S LAW-CASE.”

MARY returned from Park House just before the end of the year, accompanied by Sara. For some time Dorothy, Sara and she were busy with copying. In January the stolen manuscripts were found, untorn though sodden with rain, along with the saddle-bags which had contained them, rifled of all their other contents, in a field near John Fletcher’s house. It was believed that the thieves were Grasmere people. The recovery of the manuscript meant work for them all. They proceeded to copy the *Poem to Coleridge*; Sara started making a transcript of the *Tour*. Both of these were to be gifts for Coleridge on his return. Dorothy, in addition to continuing work upon a fair copy of the *Poem to Coleridge*, began making a copy of her Recollections of the tour in Scotland, to be bequeathed to her namesake, the little Dorothy.

On the 24th of January old Mrs. Sympson died, and on the 27th they all attended her funeral. Dorothy was grieved, not so much for the death of the old lady, who had merely been fretting and pining for the past fifteen months, as that poor Mrs. Sympson’s last days had been consumed in useless sorrow for her daughter, whose late flowering-time had been so strange and sad.

The opening months of the year were very stormy. In February gusty winds swept Nab Scar and bore down fiercely upon the cottage. Sometimes the children were a little frightened at the noise of the blasts. One stormy day Dorothy wrote some verses on the wind to amuse Johnny:

What way does the Wind come? What way does he go?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,

Through wood, and through vale; and, o'er rocky height
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:
—But let him range round; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm;
Untouched by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,—but that half-stifled knell,
Alas! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.
—Come now we'll to bed! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care?
He may knock at the door,—we'll not let him in;
May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here's a *cozîe* warm house for Johnny and me.

During these stormy nights Dorothy often thought of Coleridge, and wondered whether he was wandering by land or sea. Since John's death they had only heard from him once. There was something painful in this. In other days letters like volumes had come constantly. Now, in their need, where he alone could comfort, there was silence. They feared lest he might be tormenting himself. He might well—they knew—be silent from excess of feeling, for there had been other deaths that had grieved him and pressed on him heavily, especially the death of Tom Wedgwood in July.

The last time they had heard of him he had been in Trieste. When the news came that the French had occupied Trieste, the complete absence of letters from him had been disquieting. William tried to convince Mary and Dorothy that he would have no difficulty in avoiding the French, and Southey that he must have reached Vienna before the French, and that he would wheel round

and pass through Hungary and Prussia. But none of them had any certainty, and they all feared for one so little able to take care of himself at any time.

The suspense was hard to bear. Dorothy tried to school herself to patience and to tell herself that she expected no news, yet on post days she could not prevent her heart from beating high with hope. Every sound flowed over her heart like water over a wound, until at last she heard the cry that letters had come and that there was no word from Coleridge. Then there was nothing to do but to compose herself to endure for another period of waiting. The nights were the worst. In the day-time she could reason with herself. But during the long nights, lying quietly with Johnny in her arms, she could not rid herself of the saddest thoughts.

In March at last there came the news through their friend Stoddart that Coleridge had turned back from Trieste, and that he had been safe at Naples at the end of December.

William was restless throughout these months. Not only was he kept at strain by anxiety for Coleridge. The anniversary of John's death brought back troubling thoughts, and a brooding pride and tenderness which found an outlet in some lines finished in February and called *Character of the Happy Warrior*.

Fearing to give way to a renewal of grief, he began to think it would be a good thing if he could get away from Grasmere for a time. New things and new faces would help him to combat his moods. His thoughts turned to London. Sir George Beaumont had invited him to Grosvenor Square; Christopher was in town; Montagu would welcome him eagerly; he longed to see Charles Lamb. He left Grasmere on March 29th, leaving Sara Hutchinson with Mary and Dorothy.

On May 25th he returned home. Mary and Dorothy, and Sara, who was still their companion, thought that his holiday had done him a great deal of good. He had seen Kit and Priscilla and reported that John Wordsworth, their first-born son, was a very fine boy. He was very sorry for the Montagus, for he thought Mrs. Montagu was dying: she seemed to have lost all

strength since her confinement and her voice had sunk to a mere whisper. Poor Basil was desperately worried about her. The Beaumonts had been the most delightful hosts. Dorothy was amused at a piece of fashionable slang he had brought back with him. Everything was "a bit." A picture was "a bit." A beautiful prospect in Nature was "a bit," he told them.

He was undoubtedly the better for his holiday, but the moving force in his mind was still grief, and the permanent impression he took with him from London was one which ministered to this grief, and in helping him to express it gave him relief from it for a time. There was in the Beaumonts' house a picture of Peel Castle in a storm. Sir George, when showing his pictures, had passed this one hurriedly. But William had noted it well. In the wandering days of his youth he had gazed at the castle day after day, seeing it sleeping on a glassy sea, and had invested it with a lustre borrowed from his dreams. Sir George had painted it in time of storm, braving lightning, wind and wave, and looking down on a vessel labouring in the swell of deadly water. William had been strangely affected by the picture, all the more so because he had felt the delicacy with which his host had forborne to draw his attention to it. After his return to Grasmere, its "pageantry of woe," as he called it, troubling the grief he was still endeavouring to master, filled his mind with cadences solemn, tender and austere, and gave him no peace until he had expressed what he felt in a set of verses in which he connected the picture with his own attempts to discipline his spirit.

For a time after his return the little Dorothy was never happy when out of his arms. She could now speak, although she could not yet make complete sentences, and now and again, in a kind of rapture at having him again, she would call him "dear Ather," to his intense delight. He thought her the sweetest chatterer ever seen, and could refuse her nothing.

Johnny was slower in speech. His tongue, which his father called "The Dragon of Wantley in its den," seemed to occupy the whole of his mouth, and to get into motion slowly. He was very proud of being able to say "Aunt," and many times a day would ask Dorothy questions on purpose to bring in the word "Aunt,"

but when he was in any distress or sudden fear at once the cry would be "Anny! Anny!"

He was sometimes a little jealous of his bright little sister. One day he was roused to a fury of anger. The pocket which Mrs. Clarkson's Susan had made for him was brought out of a drawer in which it had lain for a long time, and put on to little Dorothy. They thought he would have forgotten all about it, but he was instant in his protest. "That is my Susan's pocket; my Susan made it me," he kept crying out vehemently, and nothing would reconcile him to the injustice.

At the beginning of June he was sent to Park House, to be out of the way during Mary's confinement. He was very much missed at Grasmere, not only in his home but in the neighbouring cottages. Old Molly said one day to Dorothy: "I often think I see t'laal bits o' blue breeches running ovr t'floor." Dorothy was amused by the vividness of the words and used them so much that the others caught them too, and referred to Johnny as "t'laal bits o' blue breeches."

While he was away there came for him a beautiful library of children's books from Lady Beaumont. Johnny had already one literary treasure. In February Mr. Lamb had begged "Mr. Johnny Wordsworth's acceptance and opinion of *The King and Queen of Hearts*." But Lady Beaumont's gift was on a grand scale. Little Dorothy spread her hands in amazement when she saw the fine gilt covers and gay pictures, and was vehement in her rejoicing for Johnny. "Johnny book! Dear godmother sent Johnny book!" she kept exclaiming as each treasure was taken out of the case.

On a clear morning of June William's second son was born. Dorothy felt curiously moved on the morning of the birth. She felt almost as if time had stood still and Johnny were being born again. The day of the month was almost the same, the night was clear and starlit just like the night before Johnny's birth, and the birth was only two hours later. The morning that followed the night might have been the morning of three years before. The birds were singing in the orchard in full chorus. The swallows were chirping in the same nest at the window of Mary's room; the

rose trees were laden with roses; the sunshine was fair on the mountains. Dorothy felt an extraordinary tenderness welling up in her heart as she looked at the baby, as if her heart were filled with a double rushing-in of love for him from the first moment of his life; as if she were giving him his own share of love and also the love she had given to John, the first-born.

The little Dorothy was no less enthusiastic. Every time she saw her baby brother she hung over him in ecstasies. She was now Dorothy's companion at night, and rather a restless and feverish sleeper. She thought so much about her little brother that she talked of him in her dreams, whispering to herself now and again, "Baby! Baby!"

A few days after the birth of the baby they were all very sorry to hear of the death of Mrs. Montagu, who had been losing strength ever since her confinement in May. Poor Basil Montagu was almost distracted. He could not sleep, and he told William that he feared he would go out of his senses. He fancied that if he came to Grasmere he would be able to get some sleep again, and he proposed to come as soon as possible after the funeral, which was to be on the 23rd.

Dorothy was very sorry for him, for she knew that his wife, beautiful, gracious, gentle, and sweet in a shadowy kind of way, had been all that he most admired and desired. Coleridge, too, had liked Mrs. Montagu. How often had he said that Laura Montagu's way of playing the harp was "quite divine"!

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The baby was christened a day after he was a month old. At first Mary and Dorothy had wished to call him William, but already they were feeling the confusion that arose from having two Dorothys in the house. Finally they decided not to have two Williams, and the child was christened Thomas, after Tom Hutchinson, who was his godfather. Mary Monkhouse, who was his godmother, came from Penrith for the christening, and Joanna came from Park House.

The Thursday after the christening, on a cloudless July morn-

ing, William set out from Dove Cottage, bearing his daughter on his back, and followed by Dorothy and Hannah Lewthwaite, each of them carrying a bundle. He was taking his darling to Park House, because the vale of Grasmere was full of the whooping-cough. They were joined by a youth, who offered to relieve William of his burden for a little. The child did not in the least mind being in a stranger's arms; she dropped asleep for a short time, wakened as happy as a bird, eager to have her little can in her own hands, and now and again she asked to be set down, and drank with great enjoyment of the mountain streams. She greeted the sheep with "Baa Baa Black Sheep," as she passed them, and called out, "Curly cow Bonny let down thy milk," when she saw some cows. Confident and bright as she was, she kept an eye on her father and "Anny," and when she thought they had gone too far would cry: "Ather, turn back again; Anny, turn back again." William would go back, his heart melting with pleasure at her cry.

The stranger left them at the head of Grisedale, and after that William carried her again until they came to the Luffs' house. Mrs. Luff was away, but the child made herself quite at home, taking a fancy to a stool on which she seated herself, crying out possessively, "Min a stool," and calling for "sugar-butter-whew," which Anny had told her should be given to her as a treat at Glenridding. They went down Ullswater in a boat. This was the only part of the journey that was not a pleasure. The child screamed and struggled, impatient of the confinement, and did not cease screaming until she slept.

It was so late when they arrived at Park House that the stars had already appeared in the sky. Johnny was in bed. Dorothy, who was longing very much to see him, feared to go and look at him lest she should unsettle him: she was especially reluctant to do this as he was to be sent to Penrith early in the morning in case his sister had already some touch of infection. She said unguardedly to Sara: "I *should* like to see his bits o' blue breeches." Little Dorothy, who had seemed half asleep, became all alive at this, and began to cry out: "Johnny breeches! See Johnny breeches." There was no quieting her, so they all went upstairs. Johnny slept on undisturbed while his sister danced like a spirit of joy over his

clothes, recognizing with delight each garment she had not seen for a long time: "Johnny breeches! Johnny jacket; Johnny shoes!" and then with a climax of ecstasy: "Johnny stockings."

The children were away most of the summer. The cottage felt very empty and quiet without them, yet it was impossibly overcrowded when all the family was at home. The overcrowding made endless work, and Dorothy and Mary were beginning to feel that they never had any leisure. For months they had not opened a book. They did not know how they could manage during the winter, always the most difficult time of the year. In summer they could use Fletcher's cottage across the road, and the moss hut at the top of the garden was as good as another room to them. But in winter it was difficult to make everybody comfortable in Dove Cottage. Both Mary and Dorothy shrank from the task. Lady Beaumont invited them to winter in the farmhouse at Colcorton, which she could place at their disposal. They were delighted with this offer, but were reluctant to accept it until they had heard from Coleridge and knew what he wished to do. As no one had heard anything of him since March, they trusted that he was nearing home, and they wished to be at Grasmere to welcome him back. They were ready to look for a house near Keswick, if they found he wished to remain in the North. This they thought was quite likely, for he had been very much vexed when he had heard of the way in which Mr. Jackson had sold Greta Hall. He had hated the thought that the place made holy by Hartley's first sweet communings with Nature should be profaned by the presence of a ruffian like White. Mr. Jackson had repented of his rashness; the bargain had fallen through; the house was still available, so it was possible that Coleridge might decide to remain at Greta Hall.

While they were in this uncertainty about their future home they received a most amazing piece of kindness from Lord Lowther. Thomas Wilkinson had mentioned Wordsworth's desire to purchase the Place Fell estate, and Lord Lowther, thinking the only difficulty one of money, and that the price was £800, had ordered £800 to be paid into Mr. Wordsworth's account. William did not know what to do about the gift. The price of the estate was £1000, and he did not think it worth this. He hated to spend another

man's money on a purchase on which he would not have spent his own. He was embarrassed at the thought of taking money from one he had never met. Yet he did not wish to hurt either Thomas Wilkinson, who was probably expecting an eager letter of thanks, or Lord Lowther, who intended nothing but kindness. Finally he agreed to accept £200 of Lord Lowther's money to make up to £1000 the £800 he had himself been ready to give. And so the estate became his.

Half of the money he gave for it was Mary's offering.

Yet he was not altogether pleased with what Thomas Wilkinson had done. He told Thomas, as gently as he could, that if he had been consulted beforehand, he would never have accepted Lord Lowther's offer. Thomas took this quite well, and even seemed happy that William had not been given the opportunity of refusing.

Just after this, William and Mary, taking the baby with them, went to Park House to see the children. It was while Dorothy was alone at the cottage that definite news of Coleridge arrived. Word came from Mrs. Coleridge on August 15th that she had heard from the Coleridges of Ottery that her husband had arrived off Portsmouth. The Coleridges had the news from Mr. Russell, an Exeter artist, who had been Coleridge's travelling companion.

Dorothy was overjoyed. The sudden rush of feeling was almost painful until she had shared it with others. She sat down at once to write to William. Then she sent brief messages to Mrs. Clarkson and Lady Beaumont, almost before she allowed herself to feel the measure of her joy and relief.

Coleridge would be back before the summer had passed from the hills. He had not written, doubtless, because he was hastening to them. In the divine comfort of his presence they would forget the pain they had suffered during the time of separation. They could all begin their lives anew. Dorothy remembered the many times he had come back to them, and the flowing-in of life that had come with his presence. Yet one memory caught at her, startling, vivid—Coleridge, as she had seen him with sharpened vision, after a long absence, coming into the cottage on a wild March morning, with the raindrops on his coat—stupefied, and looking about him with dazed and lifeless eyes.

3

For some days Dorothy felt as if Coleridge might appear at any moment, might come in hot and tired after walking over Helvellyn or might drop out of any chaise or coach from Kendal. Then the first impatient expectation passed, and they all settled down to wait. A shadow passed over their joy when the first letter came, written on the 18th, the day after Coleridge had reached London, from Lamb's rooms—brief, colourless, indefinite, void of all comfort, and distressing in the impression it made of sickness and suffering. This letter was followed by reports, all more or less disquieting, of Coleridge's strangeness, of the nervous fears that made him literally afraid to ask for any of his friends and gave him the appearance of apathy, of his shrinking from news, and extreme dejection. Neither William nor Dorothy worried too much about these reports, however; Coleridge was not as other men, nor were his ways as other men's ways; he had always shown an extraordinary sensitiveness about inquiring for his friends after an absence, and he had always had an infinite capacity for self-torture. It was Mary Lamb who first of all quickened their faint uneasiness and disappointment to an anxiety that would not be gainsaid. Obviously fatigued to exhaustion by Coleridge and the pressure of his moods, she wrote in great perplexity and trouble of mind. Her letter reached Grasmere at the beginning of September. She was distressed by the feeling that in writing she was violating her own sense of delicacy, and yet, in the pity for Mrs. Coleridge and the fears for Coleridge which agitated her, she felt that she must do something. She wrote to say that Coleridge had come back sick in mind as well as in body, and that the thought of returning to his wife, to whom he refused to write, threw him literally into a stupor of misery. Her fears for him at times were of the gravest kind. She wished either that Mr. Wordsworth would come to town, or that Mr. Southey and he would try to induce Mrs. Coleridge to consent to a separation. William, half inclined to blame himself for not having hastened to London the moment he had heard of Coleridge's arrival, wrote at once offering to go to London or anywhere else, and pressing for an immediate

meeting. To this Coleridge replied in three lines that he was preparing to come North. When day after day passed and he did not appear, William became impatient of waiting. He felt sure that Coleridge had fallen into a dream-like state of misery and inertia, and he longed to go to London and rescue him. The only thing that kept him from setting out was that he feared they might actually cross each other on the way. The uncertainty was torturing. Coleridge in his hesitant misery played a cruel tune on everybody's nerves.

Towards the end of September some kind of decision as to the winter could no longer be postponed. Lady Beaumont had to be considered, and the little ones, who should travel, if they were to travel, before the cold weather came on. Mary and Dorothy needed some time to prepare, if the whole family were to make a journey to Leicestershire. William began to feel that if he went to Coleorton he would have just as much chance of seeing something of Coleridge as if he remained in the North, for Mrs. Coleridge said her husband was going to begin a course of lectures in London in November. And so the Beaumonts' long-standing invitation was at last accepted.

Coleridge had written to his wife, for the first time since his return, on September 16th, saying that he expected to be home on the 29th September. William could not bear to leave Grasmere while there was the least chance of his coming. And so they lingered, after all their packing was finished, hoping daily that he would appear, until almost the end of October.

At the end of October, although still expecting to see him walk in any day, they made their final preparations for the journey. They set out in a chaise for Kendal, looking backwards even at the last moment, in some hesitation and uncertainty, and grievously disappointed that the summer and early autumn had passed in such dreary and unprofitable waiting. William would have been glad to see Coleridge even then, but Mary and Dorothy, who were completely wearied, and only wished to have the journey over and to settle down in peace for the winter, were glad to have started and to have made an end of such restless alternations of hopes and fears. They had only reached Kendal,

however, when their uncertainties were renewed by a letter which reached them from Sara Hutchinson saying that Coleridge was at Penrith, which he had reached just half an hour after she had left it, that he was overwhelmed at finding them gone, and declared he could not bear to follow them to Kendal only to part from them quickly. Again all was uncertainty. William had half a mind to change his plans and return to Grasmere. Finally he contented himself with sending a special messenger with a letter, telling Coleridge they would wait for him at the Cooksons and entreating him to follow them to Kendal.

But in the course of the Sunday evening they had a message from Coleridge, sent from the inn at Kendal, and asking William to call. This was strange, but they now realized that a curious shrinking and indefiniteness marked all his actions. Everything connected with his return was touched by uneasiness of some kind. Mary and Dorothy were impatient of further delay, when so little time was left, and they set out along with William for the inn. In spite of repeated disappointments, and of a vexed feeling that Coleridge, even in coming, had come at a moment which made for him and for them torment out of what might have been rapture, they were all in a flurry of joy as they approached the inn at the thought of seeing him again. A moment later Dorothy was bewildered by the severest shock of her life. The news of John's death had not been more of a blow than the sight of Coleridge approaching, swollen beyond recognition with fat, and with a fixed mask instead of the living beloved face. They were all as if stunned. It was as if a stranger advanced to meet them, and their eager welcome died for a moment into the silence of unuttered stricken questionings. What had become of the remembered look, as of a god remembering god-like mysteries? What of the lightnings of life and wit? What of the eloquence? What of the depth and sweetness that had been able to re-create the world? Coleridge was utterly changed. His eyes were sunken in fat which seemed more like the flesh of a dropsical person than of a man in health; his expression was obscured to a look of dull misery; he had little to say; and his silence seemed the silence of apathy. All that could be gathered from him was that he must part from his wife or die.

Dorothy, as the first impression of dismay softened, felt that he was enduring a deeper misery than any he had put into words. She was profoundly moved by the suggestion of defeat that clung to him. She was moved too, strangely and with sudden quickenings of pride, by the faint and transitory flashes of something divine that now and again lit up the fat putty-coloured face. Coleridge was still Coleridge,

. . . nor
Less than Archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of glory obscured.

4

Once more their plans depended on Coleridge. William offered to go back to Grasmere, and to try to get a house named Belmont, at Hawkshead, for the winter, but Coleridge was against this. The North was poisoned for him, and he wished to leave it for ever. He hoped to be able to come to Coleorton in a month's time.

On the morning of Tuesday October 28th, Dorothy and Mary set out, along with Molly the maid, a Quaker girl from Grasmere vale, and the three children. They left William and Sara Hutchinson still with Coleridge. Dorothy had looked forward gaily to the journey in the post-chaise, which, she had said, would be no less full than the one in which Mrs. Gilpin, her children three, her sister and her sister's child, had repaired,

Unto the Bell at Edmonton.

In actuality the journey was fatiguing and troublesome, and afterwards she remembered it with sadness. Mary was worried; the baby had a bad cough; Johnny and little Dorothy, lively enough at the beginning, got weary of the confinement and towards night whined for Grasmere and old friends; Molly, the little maid, all unused to travelling, was nervous and rather frightened. Above all, the thought of Coleridge, and the memory of Coleridge's leaden face, fixed in its wretchedness, took away from Dorothy any pleasure the journey might have had.

They were all very tired when they arrived at Coleorton on the third day, hardly earlier than William and Sara, who, although

they had not started till Wednesday, had come more quickly by coach. At Coleorton all was order and comfort. They were received with such kindness that it was like a coming home. Coleridge, the long awaited, had seemed a stranger. These kind people, as yet almost strangers, were like old friends. They were just about to leave Coleorton, but while preparing to depart they did all in their power to make their guests feel at home. Dorothy liked them greatly. Lady Beaumont had a certain generous impulsive enthusiasm, half surprising in a woman of her years, but very charming. Sir George and William had many interests in common—gardens, planting, books, politics and pictures. Sir George had sent to William, shortly before they had left Grasmere, a picture in illustration of *The Thorn*. He was much interested in the amount of exact criticism his painting had called forth. Dorothy and Mary liked his treatment very much, but they thought the woman in the picture too old for Martha Ray, and the upright bough in the thorn too tall for a tree in so exposed a situation. Sir George was no less interested in the opinions of the cottagers, which William, who liked to hear the impression his own work made on simple people, had not hesitated to report. Peggy Ashburner pronounced the picture "as like a thorn as it could stare," but she too thought that in an exposed place the boughs never grew as high as the middle bough in the painting; little Molly, the maid, found the colours too grave.

Old Molly alone had been impenetrable. After regarding the picture earnestly she had not ventured to express an opinion on it. But later she confided to Peggy Ashburner that she could "mak nowt on't," adding that the frame "to be sure, was varra bonny."

Lady Beaumont was fond of hearing poetry read aloud. One evening, to her great delight, William was persuaded to read aloud the whole of the first book of *Paradise Lost*. Dorothy too enjoyed the reading. She thought that William, with his deep voice which took on readily the tone of a chant when he read verse, was an incomparable reader of Milton's poetry.

The Beaumonts left on November 3rd, and then, for some time, Dorothy and Mary were busy with household arrangements. The farmhouse was somewhat coldly situated, but as there were coal-

pits on the estate and they had excellent fires, this was no great disadvantage. There was one delightful sitting-room from whose fireside they could see the sunset, and there were two very pleasant bedrooms. The roominess of the house was a luxury after the confinement of Dove Cottage. Sir George's bailiff and dairymaid lived in the house. The dairymaid made the bread, and was ready at any time to assist Molly; a nursemaid was hired to take charge of the children; butter, milk and wheat were supplied by the farm, and plenty of fowls, game and vegetables. There were many domestic conveniences, such as an oven always heated by the large kitchen fire, so that set baking days could be abolished, and the pies cooked just when they were required. For the first time in two years Mary and Dorothy were free from actual labour. They had a most delightful and unusual sense of leisure.

And so they settled down to the winter. Sara attended to the kitchen and provisioning—Mary and Dorothy divided, as pleased them, the remainder of what had to be done. William worked hard at his poems, which he was preparing for the press. Johnny began to go to school. Every morning—full of pride and importance—he went off with his dinner in a bag slung over his shoulders and with a little bottle of milk in the pocket of his greatcoat. On Sundays they took turns of going to church. The first Sunday after the Beaumonts left, William and Sara were the churchgoers. They listened, half amused, half irritated, to a sermon against the Gnostics and those who were “hadversaries to Christianity and henemies of the gospel,” preached to a congregation consisting chiefly of a few poor old men and some boys and girls.

Dorothy revived one of the pleasures of her girlhood in the sharp autumn evenings. She loved to go out at sunset-time with William and pace backwards and forwards for hours on end under the stately trees near Coleorton Hall. Numbers of small birds, finding chilly refuge for the night in the clusters of holly, would come tumbling and fluttering out of the bushes, startled at the unaccustomed sound of footsteps as they passed. The sunsets were like a gift to Dorothy, for in Grasmere vale they had only one glimpse of the glory of the Western sky, through the inverted arch of the Dunmail Gap. Night after night they now watched the

sky covered with rosy clouds from the horizon's edge to a great height, and the light pouring gloriously through the majestic trees. Often after the sun had set they continued to walk in the light of the moon. Dorothy was reminded of the plans William and she had made when they walked in the garden and under the limes near Forncett Rectory, and planned their life in William's parsonage. She thought the parsonage at Coleorton quite a snug-gery, and wrote about this to Lady Beaumont, half rallying her at the same time for her openly expressed admiration for William: "My sister and I are very fond of the parsonage-house and should like to live there, as we said to each other one morning when we were walking beside it—if we could but persuade William to take orders, and he being a very delightful creature, you know, it would suit you, and we should all be suited."

They did not have news of Coleridge till the middle of the month, when they were relieved to hear that Mrs. Coleridge had agreed to a separation. They were very sorry for her, but the Kendal meeting had convinced them that Coleridge must be free or suffer wrecking of body and soul. The two boys were in future to be under their father's care. Mrs. Coleridge was to keep little Sally, who was devoted to her. Coleridge was bitter against his wife, who had somehow humiliated him during his brief stay at Keswick and alienated him still further. One of the things that made him harden his heart against her was that she showed him clearly her objection to a separation did not arise from deep feeling, but from her selfish desire to have a settled rank in life, and from the fear that people would talk. It angered him to the soul that she should be ready to barter his happiness for such trifles—that she should be ready to sacrifice his spiritual well-being to a kind of social vanity peculiarly hateful to him, and to a dread of gossip. Only one thing kept him from starting out at once for Coleorton, that the children there had caught whooping-cough and he was afraid of their giving it to Hartley and Derwent. He did not wish to come without the boys, for if he did, he said he would be like a bird who had succeeded in getting free from "a bird-lime twig"—only to find a string round his neck pulling him back.

Yet when he left Kendal on December 17th, he had only

Hartley with him. His wife had succeeded in keeping Derwent, whom she promised to bring to London in the spring to meet his father. Coleridge and Hartley arrived at Coleorton on Sunday the 21st at half-past one, just at dinner-time. They were welcomed with an uproar of joy. Hartley was made much of by everybody, especially by Sara, and the children were in raptures at seeing the face of a Grasmere companion.

Coleridge was half amused, half exasperated by his journey with Hartley, who had been a charming companion in the coach, chattering in the most delightful way to his fellow travellers about Keswick and his friends there, but a most inveterate rambler, wandering off by himself into the fields whenever the coach stopped, causing much trouble and anxiety, and always quick to defend himself by ingenious and baffling hair-splitting. They were all amused at his account of this hair-splitting, and Coleridge himself, it was easy to see, was half vexed by Hartley's nimbleness of wit, half proud of it. He became more his old self as he talked, and his happiness was like sunshine after storm. Dorothy felt happier when he had been an hour talking by the fireside in his old way than she had felt for a long time.

She thought that now they were to have him for some time with them they could restore him to his former self among them, and that they would be able to arrange his life so that almost unknown to himself he would lose day by day the craving for brandy to which he confessed. In this to a certain extent they succeeded. He confined himself to ale, which he drank chiefly at mid-morning, at dinner-time and at night. Indeed he began to improve in all ways. His books, which had lost their hold over him, began to interest him again. Dorothy prayed that he would be able to devote himself to one great work which would claim all his powers. She felt convinced that if he could do this, it would be his salvation.

They spent some pleasant days in walking and in making expeditions. On the 23rd the fineness of the morning tempted them to the ivied ruins of Grace Dieu, all the family except Dorothy, who stayed at home with Johnny and the baby.

In the long quiet evenings they gathered round the sitting-room fire. There Coleridge was at his happiest and best. Remembering how he had almost died of his loneliness and heart-sickness, he felt, as he looked round on all he most loved, gathered into one room, an utter content. William read aloud, night by night, the *Poem to Coleridge*. Coleridge gradually quickened to the chanting of this poem, begun at his own suggestion, and full, from beginning to end, of love for himself. When William drew near the end, with its gorgeous invocation and proud summoning up of things past, his heart, which had seemed frozen by its troubles, melted within him. He felt a passionate pride in the work. William was garlanded by this poem; he had proved himself. There could be no doubt that he was a great poet. The work was noble.

Presently the generous exultation passed into deepest self-abasement, and Coleridge sat, staring before him with a look of dreary heart-wasting, like one stupefied with misery, deaf to all voices of comfort, cowering over his own futility. William had denied himself, had stayed at home and lived austere and hard, had achieved, while he!—he had yielded to each sick whim, had wandered from lovely Grasmere to lovely Sicily, from the coast of Italy back to the mountains of Keswick, and had brought back—a grotesque dropsical body, disgraceful in a man of his years, diseased desires, and a broken will. He had corrupted himself. The poem was like clear glass in which he saw himself. And it was death and corruption that he saw. He heard again William's voice deepening and thickening at the lines :

I have thought
Of Thee, thy learning, gorgeous cloquence
And all the strength and plumage of thy Youth,

Too keen! too keen! The words were arrowy, piercing to agony. Had not strength and plumage, manhood and knowledge and the love of friends been all in vain! They had not saved him. Nothing could save him. He was as one dead at the bottom of a tomb. And all these precious things were but flowers laid on his bier.



CHAPTER V

I think there are as many Kinds of Gardening as of Poetry.

“THE SPECTATOR.”

LADY BEAUMONT before leaving Coleorton had selected a piece of ground for a winter garden, which she invited William to plan for her. William was delighted to do this, not only because it was a pleasure to him to be of service to her in any way, but because he had a passion for the more elaborate and artificial kind of gardening, which he had never been able to indulge. Also he loved winter, for like Dorothy he delighted in its economy of beauty. During the opening months of 1807 he gave his whole mind to the garden, shaping it to beauty with as much care as he would have given to shaping a poem.

The chief objects in the ground selected by Lady Beaumont were a new and elaborate wall under a terrace, a couple of picturesque cottages and a disused quarry. He let his fancy play with these and started to devise a garden, harmonious yet spirited in its contrasts, and including old and new.

His starting-point was feeling. He believed that a garden devised primarily to appeal to feeling and to delight the imagination would give a pleasure much deeper and more lasting than a garden devised primarily to please the eye. His feeling about a winter garden was that it should be a shelter, a pleasant place from which every idea of decay or desolation should be excluded. Because of this feeling, he planned along the rough arc whose base was the new wall a boundary line of evergreens, flanked with the tallest-growing firs, and sheltering a path, decorated only by wild flowers and running right round the garden. The space thus enclosed he divided into three sections. In front of the wall he designed a section, elaborate and artificial, and to be very carefully kept. Between the wall (which was to be covered with ivy and winter plants bearing brilliant berries) and the path he would

have a gorgeous flower border, with daffodils and tall white lilies next the wall, with all the spring flowers, crocuses, jonquils, hyacinths, and many other kinds, and blossoming shrubs, gay and delicate, in the middle part, and with snowdrops near the box-wood at the edge. In the autumn heaped masses of Michaelmas daisies could take the place of these varied flowers; their delicate mauve would look wonderful on misty mornings against the surrounding green, and they could be supported by other late flowers, winter cherry, china-asters, sweet-smelling late-flowering tea-roses, and Christmas roses.

He suggested that in front of this border there should be a glade with a fountain, elaborate in its stonework, like the architecture of the wall, which was towered and buttressed. He was old-fashioned and ornate in his taste, liking the more artificial kind of garden fountains and statues, bowers and grottoes. He thought that the waters of the fountain would make a delightful harmony with the bright colours in the flower border, and a pleasing contrast to the sober colour of the evergreens.

The second part of the garden, flanked by the greater part of the boundary line of evergreens, should be, he thought, rambling and simple, for the most part wild in character, consisting chiefly of groves and greenery, with no flowers except wild flowers. He saw, in his mind's eye, as the leading feature of one glade, the prettier of the old cottages, which was covered with ivy. He would have, as the central object of a second glade, belted with evergreens, a pool, with a couple of gold or silver fishes of which it pleased him to think as the genii of the place. Here the monotonous green was to be so intense that the sky itself would be reflected in the pool in shades of green. A contrast to the monotony would be provided by the old quarry, which was to be adorned with trailing plants, some of them very brilliant in colour, and which must be filled with water that would reflect the hanging plants, the evergreens upon the top, and, shooting deeper than any of these, the church spire. This part of the garden, adorned by and presided over by the spire, gave William peculiar pleasure. He thought it should be characteristically English in all its ornaments.

From the quarry he planned a flight of steps, leading under a clipped holly hedge to a third section of the garden, curving from the rambling wild part towards the more elaborate section under the wall, and mixed in its ornaments, approximating as it did to both sections and uniting them.

He had also a great fancy for having a straight alley of arched evergreens intersecting the garden, with a floor not gravelled, but green and mossy, and with a blind path that would lead to a bower, as in Chaucer's poetry.

In planning this sheltered place he did not forget the birds, who, he knew, would take advantage of every sheltered spot, and would give on the warmer days a happy flutter of life to the groves. For them, too, the garden would be a happy retreat. The holly hedge especially would be a place of glad refuge for them.—Confident meditative robin and stately strutting gay bullfinch and tits with their lovely blue and yellow heads and blackbirds and thrushes getting over the sward in short sharp runs—would add their note of colour to the green spaces. And the air would be full in the winter of their undertones of melody, and in the spring, of sweet and rapturous singing.

Some of the suggestions William made, in his enthusiasm for his idea of a winter garden as a Paradise excluding all thought of loss or decay, did not escape criticism. Dorothy and Coleridge felt that he carried the idea too far. He would have no deciduous trees, and Dorothy thought the falling off of the leaf brought its own beauty, that the bare lines of the branches were sometimes a revelation of life and grace. William, she felt, was limiting himself both in line and colour. Nothing could be more beautiful both in colour and line than the birch in winter. Many a time in Grasmere she had stood for half an hour or so on a still morning looking at the raindrops or hoar-frost on the naked twigs and admiring the enchanting effect of the contrast between the diamond sparkle of the drops and the rich purple colour of the boughs.

Coleridge was not sure that he liked the idea of a fountain in a winter garden, and Mr. Craig, the gardener, who was inclined to have a *Malvolio*-like reserve with regard to William's plans, said flatly that there would be no water for a fountain at certain

times of the year. Lady Beaumont had some doubts as to the shaded alley of evergreens passing through the garden, but William defended his idea. A straight walk like this, still, cloistered and unvaried, and soothing rather than stimulating to the mind of anyone pacing up and down in meditation, had for him a very strong appeal. Also he felt that such a sheltered walk would be exceedingly pleasant on the uncertain sharp bright days of March and April, when sun and wind were in a conflict from which neither walls nor bare leafless trees could give protection.

He usually visited the garden twice a day to look at the beginnings of the work. Dorothy was often with him, and afterwards they would walk up and down the grove in front of Coleorton Hall, or ramble through the woods.

Sometimes they walked in the moonlight. Coleridge was fond of walking in the woods in the moonlight and letting his mind be rapt and caught by the appearances of things, by the spots of light on bushes and trees making a world of phantasms, by the relation between appearances and reality. Moonlight was for him mystery and mysticism. He became spellbound in its soft glow. Once when he was walking in a path canopied by meeting boughs, the others who were a little behind came up to him standing like one dazed and bewildered. He told them that something like a flash of light had dashed across his path with such rapidity that he felt as if his life had been snatched away from him by the darting form. What had startled him was only a very large bird, perching on a bough, who, much frightened by the unaccustomed noise of footsteps, had flown upwards with a spring that had driven the bough violently down.

In her walks about Coleorton Dorothy gradually made the acquaintance of the cottagers, with whom she much liked to talk. She got to know one old man whose cottage was distinguished by two very beautiful and richly berried holly trees. As she sat by the fire along with the old man and his wife, she heard one day the story of the hollies, which was entwined with their lives. The old man told her he had planted them when he was a "young youth" going to service, and that now he would not part with them for anything in the world. It was a great grief to him that

during the winter one of the trees had been robbed of its prettiest branches by some careless boys gathering holly. He showed Dorothy exactly how the branches had been shaped so that they arched over and caressed the cottage windows. He said he would not have had them "cut away for half a guinea."

Dorothy fully sympathized with his grief and sense of loss. She would have felt just the same if some careless hand had spoilt the graceful feathering arch of the brooms which she had planted in her first year at Dove Cottage, and which had now become quite a wonder to see.

During the opening of the year there was a succession of very stormy days. Thunder and lightning, hail and floods of rain, were accompanied by frantic winds. On one day of high wind, a windmill on the moor was blown down.

Coleridge got very tired of the sound of the wind.

Stormy as the weather had been, spring came on earlier than in the North. In the beginning of February primroses were already appearing among the honeysuckles; larks, blackbirds and thrushes were chanting from morn till night, and the busy rooks added their happy discords to the chorus. The children were able to be much out of doors. They were all thriving in the freedom and comfort of the farm. Thomas, the serpent-tongued, as they called him, because of a curious pointing movement of the tongue that he made when he smiled, was winning his way quietly into all hearts. His serpent-tongued smile, and his pretty blue eyes full of light when he smiled, were his chief charms. He was thin and delicate, a great contrast to little Dorothy, or Sissy, as Johnny called her, and they were all beginning to adopt the name. Sissy was as rosy-cheeked as an apple and as fat as a little pig. Yet her movements were quick as sunlight. Her lively eyes had now and again a curious touch of wildness. She sometimes provoked Johnny to explosions of wrath in which he was quite dangerous, for not contented with his own heavy hand, whose strength was considerable, he would snatch up in his anger anything which happened to be near—stool, chair, table, stick, or even the poker.

Hartley was very lovable. He was sweet-tempered and seemingly happy, but remote and restless, whirling and self-sufficing,



HARTLEY COLERIDGE

living in a world of his own, and choosing his own friends. He was especially fond of Mr. Ward, the bailiff, whom he would accompany on his rounds about the farm or to Ashby. After these rides he would come in, full of his feats of horsemanship. Often he would have his dinner in Mr. Ward's room. In many ways he was curiously like his father. He had never done anything for himself except put his clothes on; he would drop his books or slates or pencils or any other thing with which he was amusing himself just where he happened to be, the moment he got tired of them, and would have no thought of them any more; if anyone reminded him of them, or tried to train him to put them away or to do any little practical piece of work, he would seem lost and bewildered, like one in a dream. There was nothing for it but to let him follow his own ways.

Coleridge was restless and whirling as Hartley, but was neither self-sufficing nor happy. The despair, which was the reaction from the mood of happiness and the dawning energy he had shown immediately after his arrival, had passed away, and he was now more or less constantly like what he had been during his worse times, just before he had left for Malta. At some time or other he was ailing every day. His nights were bad and he said it was impossible for him to exist without opiates, as he called the drugs he took, and without stimulants to support him during the day. They had to give in to his desire for brandy. He was often sunk in apathy from which the most urgent necessity could not move him. He was strangest of all in his attitude to some of his friends. He could not make himself write to many who were waiting to hear from him. The closer the friendship had been, the more he seemed to fear to have it mentioned. At times he seemed positively to close his heart. He would refuse for days to open letters from dear friends. Sometimes he would condemn his own conduct most feelingly. He told Dorothy that his deadness of feeling distressed no one as much as himself, as he knew it to be the sign of some disease in his soul.

His conduct towards Josiah Wedgwood was peculiarly puzzling. He had not written since his return, not even to express sympathy for the death of Tom Wedgwood. Wedgwood was deeply offended,

but Coleridge could not induce himself to write, although day after day a sense of guilt weighed him down with a dull misery, and he knew that he was acting wrongly both to the living and the beloved and honoured dead. Tom Poole had not hesitated to tell him of the offence he was giving and the pain he was inflicting. But promptings of duty reached him only as they might reach a man in a dream.

Dorothy was greatly disheartened as the days passed and she saw him unable to rouse himself, for she felt more and more convinced that if he could bring himself to attempt some absorbing piece of work he would be restored to peace and happiness. Sara was ready to do all his transcribing, if only he would begin. Even the attempt to write would do him good. Instead of this he talked of the lectures he proposed to give in London. Dorothy disliked the idea of this kind of work for him. She thought that lecturing would unsettle him, and might stimulate him to a fitful and barren brilliance for which he would pay in a nervous reaction that would leave him more and more dependent on drugs at night and stimulants in the day.

One thing that troubled her very much was that he seemed only able to cheat melancholy in those moments in which he could induce self-deception, and that he was becoming less and less scrupulous as to the means of securing this self-deception. He would blame his failures on his friends, saying that this or that chance word had disheartened him and kept him from achieving. He would twist something which had been said to rouse him to effort, and blame it as that which had taken from him the courage necessary to him before he could make an effort. It was as if he tried constantly to throw on others the responsibility for his failures. Dorothy was distressed when she found herself, quite unconsciously, parrying this tendency, selecting and choosing her words carefully lest anything she said could be made a handle of despair.

Now and again the fear seized her that he had passed out of their keeping. They could give him a home and they could take care of him physically, but they could not prevail on him in essentials. They could not give him peace and a quiet mind; they could not do anything to make him change the way of life which

was gradually undermining his strength. Without them he was wretched, but with them he no longer was well and happy. One spiritual need he had, of sympathy, constant, unfaltering, inalterable sympathy, and that they could give too, but beyond alleviating the suffering of certain isolated sharp moments it did little for him. It did not heal; it did not strengthen; it did not stimulate the desire to work; his need of it grew in proportion as it was given; he would cling, with an affection that was gradually losing the power of discrimination, to anyone who would give it. There were times when Dorothy felt as if his craving for sympathy were like the craving for a spiritual drug, hardly more profitable to the vexed soul than the opiates were to the sick body.

Yet all her fears were dim, perhaps the more torturing for being dim, only half acknowledged, many times dismissed as disloyalties of thought. Coleridge, she knew, had a marvellous way of rising from the dead. Sometimes she thought that if he could only make some final decision about his wife, he would recover peace of mind. Yet here everything was confused and obscure. All had seemed settled when he had left Keswick. Yet all was not settled. Mrs. Coleridge had not fully realized at the time that the separation was final. She had only acquiesced in a mood which had frightened and bewildered her. When forced to believe that her husband's decision was serious, she started anew to plead vehemently against it. Letter after letter arrived from her. One day in the middle of February Coleridge called Dorothy from her writing upstairs to show her a letter he had received from his wife. Dorothy was much distressed. She returned to her letter-writing shaken with pity for them both. Eager as Coleridge was to prove his wife utterly in the wrong, she could not help feeling an intense pity for poor, annoying, bustling, distracted Mrs. Coleridge. There was more in her letter than a bruised social vanity. There was suffering. Dorothy could not shut her ears or heart to the note of pain and perplexity.

Shortly after this, Coleridge, whose restlessness increased from day to day, went to London, leaving Hartley still at Coleorton. In April William followed him, taking with him Mary and Sara, who had never been to London before, and Hartley. His *Poems*

in *Two Volumes* had already appeared, and he hoped they would be profitable, as he had bargained with the publisher for 100 guineas for 1000 copies. Dorothy was quite pleased to remain at Coleorton with the children.

William was hoping to meet his admirer, young Mr. De Quincey, in town.

The children found the farmhouse quiet with Mr. Coleridge and their father and mother and Aunt Sara all gone. By the time their parents returned, after a month's absence, they were beginning to look forward to returning home. Coleorton had not yet displaced Grasmere in the thoughts of Johnny and Sissy.

Dorothy was longing to be home too, and spend most of the summer in beautiful Grasmere, but they lingered at Coleorton till the beginning of June, when Sir George and Lady Beaumont returned, and then they spent a week with their hosts. Again William delighted Lady Beaumont by reading poetry in the evenings. This time it was *Peter Bell* that he read.

On Wednesday June 10th they started on their homeward journey. Dorothy longed to revisit her friends at Halifax, and they were going to take Halifax on their way. They travelled the first day in two post-chaises, to Nottingham, where they spent the night. The second day's travelling, between Nottingham, which they left at six in the morning, and Huddersfield, was excessively fatiguing. Poor Thomas, who was wretched and ill, cried all the time, except when he was asleep. The third morning, before breakfast, they travelled from Huddersfield to Halifax. This drive, in the sweet summer morning, along the Calder and partly through thick woods, was very beautiful. It seemed doubly beautiful after the fatigues and distress of the day before. Dorothy found herself thanking God for its peace and beauty.

Coming to Halifax was like coming home. There they breakfasted, and afterwards William, Mary and Dorothy went on to Mill House, near Sowerby Bridge, while Sara Hutchinson, who had been visiting Mrs. Clarkson at Bury and had come direct from Bury, stayed along with the children at the house of Mrs. William



ELIZABETH THRELKELD

Threlkeld, whose daughter Elizabeth welcomed them with abundant hospitality. The house was so large, Dorothy was glad to think, that Thomas's crying and the noise of the two other children would disturb nobody.

Dorothy was always happy with her aunt, whose effortless goodness made her a most delightful companion. The Halifax visit was a pleasant one to all. In Mr. Rawson's carriage they visited many of the haunts of Dorothy's youth. Every favourite valley seemed more beautiful to Dorothy even than she had remembered.

Most of the old friends were there. Edward Ferguson was still at Bullace Trees, and Dorothy was very glad to see him and talk of old times. But some well-remembered faces had gone. Kind Uncle William Threlkeld had died, and little Mary Threlkeld, who had been a child seven years old when Dorothy had left Halifax. Jane, the dearest companion of all, was no longer there, but living at New Grange. A visit to Halifax was incomplete without the talking-over of old memories with Jane. And so when they left Halifax, after a fortnight's visit, it was to go to New Grange.

William gave his own copy of his recently published poems to Elizabeth Threlkeld, at parting. Mrs. Rawson, reluctant to see the last of Dorothy, came on to New Grange with them. They spent three days, from Friday till Monday morning, with the Marshalls, after which Mary, Sara, the children and Molly went on in a post-chaise to Kendal. Dorothy and William could not resist the temptation of rambling through the remainder of the country on foot.

First of all they visited Bolton Abbey along with their friends. Dorothy was in the carriage along with Mrs. Rawson, Jane Marshall and her sister. William rode beside Mr. Marshall on horseback. The first sight of the abbey, situated in a most beautiful valley, delighted Dorothy, who told Jane that it gave her more pleasure than Melrose had done. Jane was much interested in this, for she was planning a tour in Scotland later in the year.

After a pleasant day Dorothy and William parted from their friends, about six miles from Burnsall. They walked to Burnsall, where they were received at the little inn with the true hospitality

of lonely places, and where they passed the night. On Tuesday the last day of June they walked to Gordale, where they rested under the huge rock for some hours, drank of the cold water and ate their dinner. Afterwards they climbed up the side of the waterfall and made their way over the crags to Malham Cove, where they had tea at the inn. In the evening they returned to Gordale.

On Wednesday the first day of July they walked to Settle; from Settle they went to Ingleton in a cart, by Giggleswick Scar. Three miles beyond Ingleton they took the coach to Kendal, riding on the outside. Mary, Sara and the children welcomed them, and on Friday July 3rd they all returned to Grasmere in a post-chaise. The children were delighted to be home, and ran about the garden, where the roses were more abundant than ever, and the splendid brooms were just at the end of their flowering-time. Johnny was eager to see his old friends and show them his new treasures. He had been given a Noah's Ark, the nicest plaything that ever was—Dorothy thought it—and he could not rest until he had shown it to Peggy Ashburner and Molly Fisher, who seemed almost as pleased with the toy as he was himself.

All seemed the same. But all was not the same, as Dorothy, who hated change, and the passing of old things and old friends and old ways, was soon to learn. She discovered, on her first evening walk, that the trees at Bainriggs had been cut down. Some great fir trees which had overtopped the steeple tower had been given to the axe. Worse still, a vast sycamore, which, crimson and crimson-tufted, had year after year been a glory in the autumn, was no longer in its place near the parsonage. And Death had been busy in the valley. A little girl just the age of Sissy had never got the better of the whooping-cough. George Dawson, the finest young man in the vale, had been taken in the perfection of his strength. Many were gone for ever from their cottages and gardens, among them Jenny Hodgson the washerwoman and Jenny Dockeray. And old Mr. Sympson, who had defied the winter's cold and solitude, had been summoned gently as he lay on the grass on a sweet summer day, resting and enjoying the cheerful noises of the haymaking.

Old things had passed away, but new ones were arising to take their place. Chief of these was the great house standing in the face of the vale, above the church, and built by Mr. Crump of Liverpool. Dorothy had grieved over the building of this house, thinking it a blemish on the vale, yet now it was to solve for them a domestic problem Mary and she had been turning over in their minds ever since the beginning of the year, how they were going to make a home for Coleridge and his two boys, for Coleridge insisted on having the boys, and it was obvious that he could not take care of them by himself. Before leaving Coleorton they had resolved that they would make a home for Coleridge, even while they knew this would be impossible either in Dove Cottage or in the cottage at Place Fell, and there seemed to be no other house available near Grasmere. Mr. Crump, however, was ready to let his house to them for a time, so there would be ample room.

In the meantime the cottage was proving distractingly small for them even in the summer, and they were seldom all of them at home at the same time. When the Beaumonts visited Keswick in July, William spent a few days with them, and Dorothy a fortnight, during which they made two expeditions to Buttermere. Shortly after her return in August, Mr. Clarkson, passing like a meteor from place to place, spent a Monday with them. He left on the 25th, and on that day Mary and William went to Eusemere. William was recalled the following day, as Mr. Crump had arrived and wanted advice regarding the laying out of the grounds of the new house. On the 29th he went back to Eusemere. When Mary and he returned to Grasmere in the beginning of September they brought with them Sir George and Lady Beaumont, who stayed in Grasmere for a week. The day after the Beaumonts left, Mary and William set out again for a week's tour to Wastdale, Ennerdale and Whitehaven. Then they went to Cockermouth. Dorothy, thinking of their expedition, could see as clearly the privet hedge with its roses and thrushes as she had seen it thirty years before.

William was interested at this time in a kind of poetry he had

not previously attempted, and in attempting which he was perhaps influenced by his friendship with Walter Scott. While at Coleorton, pacing between the farmhouse and the Hall, he had composed the *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*, his first attempt at the heroic lay. His visit to Bolton Abbey had left him with some impressions which he longed to express in verse, more or less of this kind. At the end of September he was writing a poem dealing with a tradition on the founding of Bolton Abbey. Dorothy transcribed it for Jane Marshall, asking her to read it to Dr. Whitaker, who in his history of Craven had himself written of the tradition. In October William began a more ambitious poem, also suggested by his memories of Bolton:

From Bolton's old monastic tower
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun shines bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of crystal Wharf,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.

Dorothy was delighted with William's enjoyment of his new vein of poetry and confident progress in it.

All this time Coleridge, who had been spending the summer at Nether Stowey and at Bristol with his wife and children, had not written to them, and at last they ceased to write to him, thinking he never opened his letters. Dorothy pitied him, thinking all resolution and strength of mind must have left him, and that he was probably suffering more himself than any of them in the dreary silence he had created. On the afternoon of Wednesday November 4th, just as she had been thinking of him and writing of him, in the hut at the top of the garden, she heard a sudden tumult in the house, and a cry from Mary. A little alarmed, she hurried inside, to find Hartley skipping about the room in the greatest joy and excitement at being so near home. Derwent and Mrs. Coleridge were at the door getting out of a chaise, along with little Sara, fair and beautiful but far too delicate, and looking like a spirit beside rosy

Sissy and sturdy Johnny. With them was a young man, very modest, very quiet, very shy, very slight and short in stature. This, Mrs. Coleridge explained, was Mr. De Quincey, who had travelled with her from Bristol.

It was about four o'clock when they arrived. Mary and Dorothy persuaded them to spend the night at Grasmere. Two were to be lodged with Peggy Ashburner. Dorothy and Mary said they could make room for all the others in the cottage. Mr. De Quincey could sleep with Johnny. Soon they were all collected round the tea-table for a tea inordinately prolonged, as everybody had much to say. Mrs. Coleridge seemed in excellent spirits, and talked a good deal about her husband, whom she had left at Bristol preparing to set out for London. She brought a letter from Coleridge saying he hoped to be with them in March.

The Coleridges left after dinner the next day. Mr. De Quincey was persuaded to stay a little longer at Grasmere. William was delighted to see at last in the flesh this young disciple who, although passionately eloquent on paper, was so elusive and shy that he had evaded repeated invitations to Grasmere and proposals of meeting in London, and who, although he had been twice in the district, had not found courage to present himself until Mrs. Coleridge had taken him under her wing.

Mary took him out walking with her in Easedale, a favourite walk of hers. As they passed a cottage of grey mountain stone that looked as if it had grown out of the mountain, like the huge stones and scattered rocks on every side of it, she stopped to speak to a little ragged girl who was smiling at her. De Quincey thought the child all the more beautiful for her rags, and admired her air of grace and innocence. She was, Mary told him, the sister of their little nursemaid Sally Green, but a much nicer child than Sally.

As he was interested in everything connected with William's youth, Dorothy took him to see Esthwaite Water, which on that dull November day looked little more than a wild pond. When they were returning from their expedition, blinding rain came on, and the evening closed in, very threatening and gloomy. De Quincey was thinking that Dorothy, walking swiftly beside him

with shoulders, carelessly stooping, was more like a boy than a woman, when she startled him by saying abruptly: "Pray let us call for a few minutes at this house." Opening a garden gate she led the way through a little shrubbery, beautifully kept and chiefly composed of lawns. In a minute they were in a small comfortable drawing-room, and he was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd of Brathay, who struck him as being radiant with kindness and pleasure at this unexpected visit.

When he was ready to go on to Keswick on the Saturday he found that the Wordsworths were preparing to take him across the mountains, over Kirkstone. Their frugal and simple ways had amazed him in the days he had spent at the cottage. Now he found that the day's expedition was to be made in a cart driven by a country girl. This roundabout way of going to Keswick had been selected, not only because it would show Mr. De Quincey the country in its greatest beauty, but because Mary had arranged, if the weather were good, to join Joanna and her friend Miss E. Green, who with her sister now tenanted Eusemere. She hoped to accompany them on a visit to Stockton, where her brother John lived, and her rich old Uncle Harry.

As they went along De Quincey noticed with interest that it was Dorothy who talked to many of the people they met on the way and exchanged flying greetings with others.

He spent the night at Eusemere, and in the morning set off with Mr. Wordsworth, who promised to take him through the Lowther woods. They dined in the evening at Eamont Bridge, and spent the night at Penrith. The next day De Quincey walked alone to Keswick, where he was received with hospitable bustle by Mrs. Coleridge and welcomed by the Southneys.

He returned to Grasmere two days later, along with Mr. Wordsworth, who had followed him to Keswick. On the 12th he said good-bye to his hosts at ten o'clock at night in the inn at Ambleside, after having promised Miss Wordsworth to take careful notes of Coleridge's lectures when he was in London. He then crossed the country from Ambleside to Kendal in a post-chaise, to catch the midnight mail at Kendal. The night ride, coming as the

end to a visit so memorable, stirred him strangely. The trampling hoofs clashing upon the peace of the sleeping woods aroused clashing rhythms in his brain and a storm flight of thoughts; and the pace of hurricane, the lightning descent from the crest of Orrest Head, was a delirious rapture. He knew that the visit to Grasmere was for him the beginning of a new life. He had entered a new world, into which for years he had wished to enter, a world teeming with power and beauty as yet unsuspected by other men, a world from which the fopperies and mean trappings of existence had been cut away, a world in which men, withdrawn from the petty tumults of the day, were as gods walking in lovely places, contemplating the divine ideas of truth and beauty. Up to the time of his visit it was Wordsworth who had seemed to him the creator of this world. Many times on London streets he had looked towards the North as if even by turning towards Grasmere he could breathe an ampler air. When the coach had stopped at Dove Cottage his heart had beat fast and, when Wordsworth had appeared, he had felt that Charlemagne with all his peers or Death on his pale horse could not make his pulses beat more tumultuously. Yet it was not the poet who lingered in his imagination as the figure symbolic of this world, elemental, but the poet's sister, at once welcoming and shy, passionate and restrained, dreamy and practical, her face deep-tanned by sun and wind, yet delicate, so finely was it chiselled by feeling and worn as if by suffering, and her eyes, with their occasional fleeting piercing abstracted look of wildness as if she saw something more than others saw, something she could not reveal—for there were times when if she spoke she was almost inarticulate, as if struggling with a painful pressure and complexity of thought. Yet what she said was always interesting. It was more, he thought with a sudden burst of feeling; it was bewitching. Who could listen to it and not know that it revealed a rare and exquisite spirit, fire refined? Mrs. Wordsworth, gracious and gentle, was all woman, and a very sweet woman. The poet was a dalesman, with much in him of the earth to which he belonged. But Dorothy! his heart filled as he thought of her, divining through the glancing quickness of her movements and her captive speech the impassioned imprisoned

glow of her thoughts. She was as one whose element was not earth, but fire.

After De Quincey's departure, William continued to work on his new poem for over a week. Then he grew restless and began to long to follow Mary to John Hutchinson's house in Stockton, but he waited too long. The weather, which had been fine, broke suddenly. On the 20th there came a great fall of snow. The air was thick with falling shafts from morning to night. The oldest cottagers could remember nothing like it for forty years, when the "great snow," as it still was called, had fallen, bringing with it hardships and dangers still vividly remembered.

The roads were speedily blocked up, and so great was the depth of the snow that the blocked masses could not be moved for some time. Even by the end of the month the carriage-way between Keswick and Penrith was not quite clear.

William at last set out on foot. He left home between ten and eleven o'clock on December 1st. He wrote to Dorothy to say that having borrowed a horse during part of the way he had reached Penrith in the evening between five and six o'clock, in spite of having stopped on the wildest part of Hutton Moor, fascinated by the skill of a shepherd on horseback collecting from the drifts the scattered and perishing flocks. He had also wasted some time by turning back to search in the dusk for a lost glove.

A thaw had set in during the day, bringing with it a dreary rain, yet he had found his journey interesting with impressions of the storm. The white avenues which had been cut through the snow, in some places half a mile long and often between two and three yards deep, had transformed the roads. And Skiddaw, seen from the Raise, was a rock of alabaster.

One day while he was away Dorothy walked over the snowy roads to Brathay. Charles Lloyd, who got many magazines and reviews, showed her the October number of *The Edinburgh Review*, in which William's poems—she had been told—had been reviewed with the utmost "severity." Dorothy, as she read, laughed at the word "severity." The review seemed to her like a schoolboy's braying. When she remembered the hours during which she had

seen William shaken as a reed is shaken by the wind and the hours in which she had listened to William and Coleridge discussing the principles of poetry, it seemed to her utterly a thing of sound and fury. William and Coleridge, she knew, had seen beneath the appearance of things. This writer had seen nothing but the crust, was so blind that literally he regarded the seer as a delirious dreamer. He knew nothing of poetry and its ways. Moreover, the mood in which he wrote, contradictory and spiteful, would have been impossible if he had known anything of poetry.

"Master Jeffrey will very soon write himself into disgrace," she said lightly to Lloyd when she had finished reading and was getting ready for her return walk over the snow. She had little doubt that the review was by Jeffrey.

She felt, as she walked swiftly home, that such criticism could do nothing against true writing. The great thing was that William had glimpsed truth, and had been able to express it. All the vain and stupid critics in the world, with their blundering witticisms, could not come between him and his readers. Many proofs were now beginning to come, showing that his poetry was finding its way to the hearts of men and women. Now and again friends told them of chance sayings showing how it was sometimes valued. Lady Susan Bathurst had told Lady Beaumont that it had brought the sweetest consolation to her mother in pain and sickness. It was beginning to draw to William those whom he had most interested. Mr. De Quincey said he was going to settle in the North. John Wilson, William's "adorer," as they had called him for years, was beginning to build a house near Orrest Head. A more recent admirer who longed to meet William was Henry Robinson, Mrs. Clarkson's interesting "cousin."

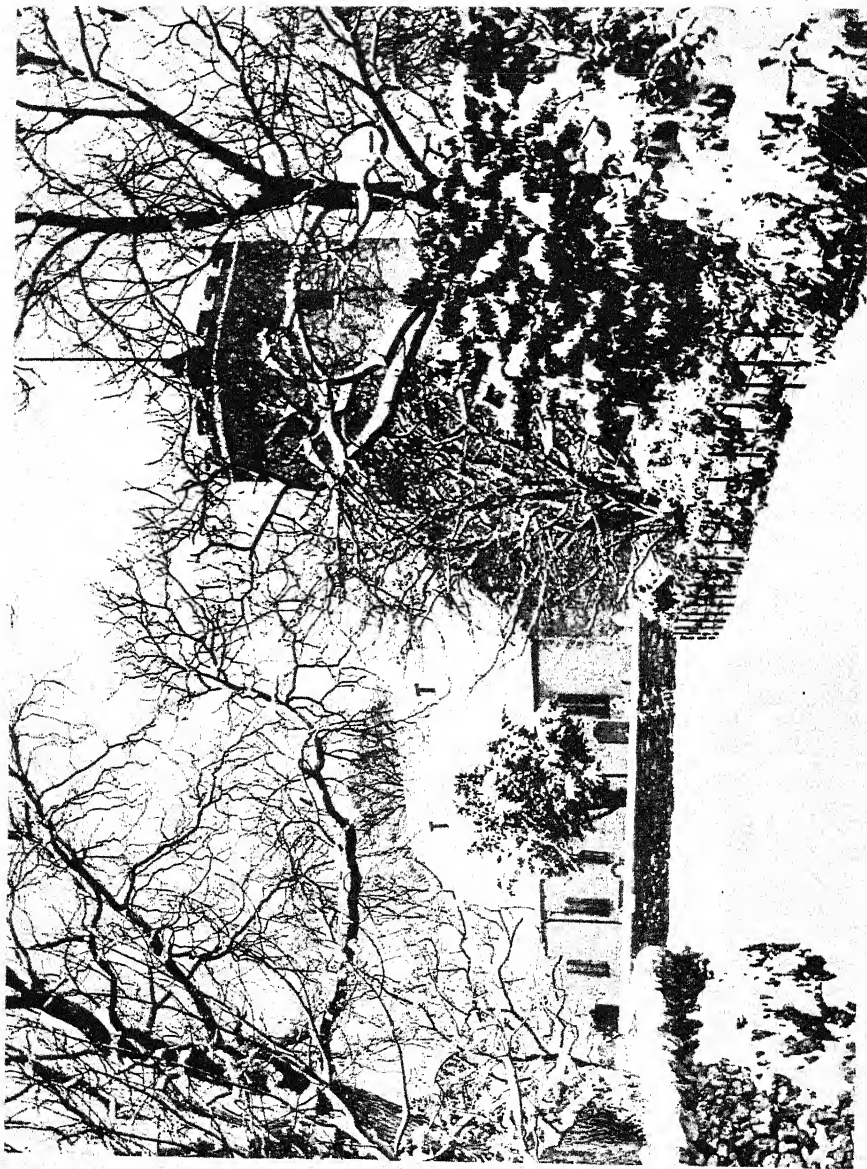
These things were good to remember; every single proof of William's power over the innocent and good was dear to her. The only thing that troubled her was that William, in spite of his brave words about not minding the idle buzz and petty stings of criticism, might be wounded by the review. Perhaps also such indiscriminating abuse might affect the sale of the poems, which was already very slow. But no sooner had Dorothy thought of this than she plucked up heart, flushing with a new pride. They were

not as people who had no defender. They had a royal defender. Coleridge himself proposed to touch the toad sitting at the ear of the public, as he called *The Edinburgh Review*, with the Ithuriel spear of some lectures on William's poetry which he was going to deliver at the Royal Institution in the spring. Surely Coleridge, sitting in the heavens of vision, could laugh such dim-eyed pretenders to scorn.

Dorothy spent the greater part of December alone, except for the children, for in that stormy time there were few visitors. Old Molly could no longer come to the cottage. She was not well, and in bad spirits, as she always was when ailing in any way, pathetic, bewildered like a child, by pain. Her legs were much swollen and hurt her a good deal.

Of the children Thomas was Dorothy's most constant companion. Johnny and Sissy now went to school in the day, and when at home they played together. Johnny's Noah's Ark had not yet lost its charm; Sissy would play for hours with her baby, which she loved none the less because it was made out of an old pocket-handkerchief. But Thomas, in the absence of his mother, attached himself with intense devotion to his aunt. He had walked by himself for the first time on the first day of November, and now he trotted after Dorothy all day, crying, "Anny, Anny," and, if he did not find her in one room when he came upstairs, he would start looking into all the rooms with steady determination, crying, "Anny, Anny," and would take no notice of anyone else until he had found her.

Before the roads had been cleared of the great fall of snow, a keen frost set in. Winter in Grasmere always seemed marvellously beautiful to Dorothy, with the stripped trees showing every delicate strong line. She thought she had never seen it so beautiful before, as she looked at the ice-bound country. At the opening of the year William and she had been planning a winter garden. Here was a vast winter garden on a scale such as no man could attempt, created in a night, wrought out of such airy and insubstantial gifts as the heavens alone could supply, and all the more



GRASMERE CHURCH

lovely and visionary because like a vision it was transitory. The lake was of firm transparent ice, crystal-clear; the trees were covered as with foliage, sparkling white; every blade of grass, every withered stalk, shone crusted thick with hoar-frost, gleaming in defiant beauty in the bright sunshine. Blue skies looked down upon this snowy world.

Dorothy's heart filled with worship. "What a beautiful thing God has made winter to be!" she said to herself morning after morning as she marvelled to see the vision still unbroken. It seemed to her that she had lingered for eight years among the mountains and the vales before they had chosen to reveal themselves in their peculiar beauty. No flowering-time or time of blossom and breathing life could be half so fair as the vast white earth, breathless and still, and the snowy hills under the intense and brilliant heavens.

At the beginning of the Christmas season a fine hamper of game and other good things arrived from Lady Beaumont. Dorothy was much pleased with it, for in addition to William and Mary and the children, who would all heartily appreciate this addition to the larder, little Bessy and Jane Hutchinson, who were coming from Miss Weir's school at Appleby, with Miss Weir, to spend Christmas at the cottage, would enjoy this fine fare very much.

The Christmas preparations for these visitors were almost finished before Mary and William came back from Stockton. On the 23rd, just as Dorothy was putting Johnny and Sissy to bed, at about seven in the evening, she heard the sound of wheels on the road. A moment later she was welcoming William, and Mary, who was radiant with happiness at being home again after her long absence. John and Sissy were allowed to come into the sitting-room in their night-coats, and they were in great joy both at the return of their father and mother and at the many nice things their mother had brought. Thomas was already asleep. Before bed-time he wakened, and his mother went to him. He seemed to know her, but alas! his face wrinkled uneasily, and his blue eyes a-daze in the candlelight had no welcome for her at that sleepy time.